

Rycharde Rolle hermyte of Hampull in
his contemplacyons of the drede and loue of
god With other dyuerse tytles as it the Weth
in his table.





This shorte epytyle that foloweth is dryyded in
sondry maters / & eche mater by hymselfe in
sondry tytles as this kalender sheweth. And þ thou
mayst sone fynde what mater the pleaseþ these ty-
tles ben here in the Epytyle marked with dyuerse let-
tres in maner of a table

A How eche man sholde desyre to loue god.

B How men somtyme loued god / & how holy men
somtyme were vyltyed with swetnesse in the loue
of almyghy god.

C What is drede & how a man shold drede god

D What is charyte & how & why þ shalt loue thy god

Of foure degrees of loue / & in the fyrste ben fy-
ue poyntes. **O**rdeyned loue.

E The fyrst is that thou shalt loue thy flesshe one-
ly that it be susteyned.

H The.ii. is þ shalt loue þ worlde to no supfluyte.

O The.iii. is þ shalt loue thy neyghbour for god.

N The fourth is thou shalt loue thy frende for his
good lyuyng.

I The fyfth is thou shalt loue thyn enemye for þ
more drede.

In the seconde degree of loue ben thre poyntes.

Clene loue

B The fyrst poynt is thou shalt loue no byce with
vertue.

H The seconde is þ shalt hate all euyl customes.

M The thyrde is thou shalt not sette lyght by syn

a. ii.

ne be it neuer so lytell.

In the thyrde degree of loue be fyue poyntes

Stedfast loue.

1 The fyrst is thou shalt loue god with all thy de
lyre.

2 The seconde is thou shalt in the begynnynge of
thy werkes thynke on þy worschyp & drede of god.

3 The thyrde is thou shalt do no synne vpon trust
of other good dedes.

4 The fourth is thou shalt rule the discretly that
thou sayle not for none feruent wyll.

5 The fyfth is thou shalt not leue thy good lyuynge
for feynthe herte ne for temptacyon.

In the fourth degree of loue ben. viii. poyntes.

Parfyte loue.

1 How by encrease of vertues thou mayst come
to perfeccyon.

2 How good wyll is & may be in dyuerse maners

3 What parfyte is in prayer and in what maner
thou shalt praye.

4 How thou mayst beware & knowe of temptacy
ons wakyng or slepyng & howe thou shalt with
stande theym.

5 How thou shalt be pacyent & what tyme pacy
ence is moost nedefull.

6 How perseueraunce is nedefull & how þy mayst
be perseueraunt.

7 By what prayer or thought thou mayst be
styred to deuocyon.

ExPLICIT tabula.

In the begynnynge and endynge of all good
werkes worshyp & thankynge be to almygh
ty god/maker & byer of all mākynde/begyn
ner and ender of all goodnes/without who
se gyfte & helpe no maner vertue is ne may
be/whether it be in thought/wyll/oz dede/than what
euer we synfull creatures thynke oz do speke oz wy
te/that may tourne in to proufyte of mannes soule/
to god onely be the worshyp that sente al grace/to vs
no praylynge/for of vs without hym cometh no thyn
ge but fylthe & synne. Now than good god of his en
deles myght & plenteuous goodnes graunte me grace
to thynke somwhat of his dere loue & how he holde
be loued/of that same loue some wordes to wyte whi
che may to hym be worshyp/to the wyter mede/and
proufytable to the reder. Amen.

How eche man sholde desyre to loue god.

Amonge all creatures that euer god of his en
deles myght made/was there none þ he so lo
ued as he dyd mankynde/whom he made euerlastyn
ge blysse in stede of aūgels/whiche dyd fal from blysse
downe in to helle. But that good god loued so man/
that for as moche as man had forseyted that blysse
thorugh synne of Adam/he of his plenteuous chary
te became man/to bye body and soule that was lost.
In what maner he bought vs/euery crysten mā kno
weth oz sholde knowe/that no lasse pryce.but suffred
his owne precyous body to be all to rente with bytter
paynes of scorynge. He suffred also a garlonde of shar
pe thornes prellid to his heed/whiche percyd so the

bernes that the blood ran doune in to his eyen / nose
mouth & eeres. Afterwarde upon the crosse his bones
were drawe out of Joynte / the berne & the senewes
were boysten for strayte drawynge / to þe crosse he was
nayed honde & foot / and so sayled the blood of kynd
with hytter paynes of deth. He betoke his spryde to
the fader of heuē / and than suffred at the last his glo
ryous herte to be thozugh percyd with a shapre spere
for to gyue his herte blood to hye man body and sou
le into Joye without ende. ¶ Of god of his grete good
nes loued thus mā gyuyng hym ouer this wytte and
reason and all other thyng that hym nedeth / kynde
ly a man sholde nyght and daye with all his wyttes
loue hym and feruently desyre to conne loue suche a
good god that all thyng made all thysse gyueth and
susteyneth. Of this desyre there ben many men and
women whiche haue full grete lpyng to speke of the
loue of god / and all daye askynge how they sholde lo
ue god & in what maner they sholde loue to his pleas
saunce for his endeles goodnes. To suche men & wo
men of that good wyll and that holy desyre I wyll shewe
the fyrste of holy men befoze this tyme how feruent
some were in the loue of god. Also in how hyghe a de
gree of loue some were vlyt in þe sweteness of cryst
But it may be so that it is full harde for the moze par
tye of men & women to come to so hyghe a degree of
loue / therfoze after the shewynge of suche hyghe de
grees of loue somewhat I wyll wyte to other of sym
ple knowynge how they sholde loue god / as that gras
cyous god wyll gyue me grace.

BHow men somtyme loued god / & how holy men
sometyme were bysytēd with swetenēs in the loue
of almyghty god.

Ifynde & rede of oure holy faders in olde tyme
that for the loue of god they forsoke the worlde
and all worldey thynges and lyued in wyldernes by
grasse & by rotes / suchē men were seruēt in the loue
of god. But I trowe there ben but fewe or elles none
that folowen them now / for we fynde not by goddes
lawe or heste that we sholde loue so. For all be it they
were kepte & susteyned so it was moost by the myght
and grace of god / as no goodnes may be without hy
yet I trowe they lyued so moche by þ strength of kyn
de that was in man tho dayes. I wyll not counsell the
to lyue as they dyde / for thou mayst by other maner
lyuyngē come to the loue of god / as thou shalt se after
warde. ¶ I fynde also furthermoze of other ful holy
men of ryght late tyme whiche lyueden a ful holy lyfe
and toke theyr lyuelode as feblenesse of man asketh
now in our dayes. Some of these men as I haue her
de and redde were bysytēd by the grace of god with
a passyngē swetenēs of the loue of cryste / whiche swe
tenēs for an exāple they shewed afterwarde by theyr
wrytyngē to other men folowynge / yf ony wolde tra
uayle to haue that hyghe desyre or degree of loue.
¶ This loue whiche they haue wryten to other is depar
ted in thre degrees of loue / whiche thre degrees they
hadden one after an other standynge stablyshed in
theyr desyre / and susteynynge pacyently for the loue of
god many trybulacyons & temptacyons tyll they cos
me by holy contemplacyon to þ hyghest degre of loue

of tho thre. By this I suppose he that hath grace to co
me to the fyrst may by goddes helpe come to the se/
conde / & so with a feruent desyre & good perseueraun
ce he may come to the thyrde. Shortely I wyll shewe
here these degrees of loue / for by cause all men and
women that sholde rede this haue not knowynge of
theym / ne neuer herde speke of suche degrees of loue
befoze tyme. ¶ Degrees of hyghe loue. .i. ¶ The
fyrste loue is so feruent that no thyng whiche is con
trary to goddes wyll may ouercome that loue / welth
ne wo helthe ne sykenes. Also he þ hath this loue wyl
not make god ones angry for all the worlde withoute
ende / but rather suffre all the payne that myght come
to ony creature than ones wylfully dysplease his god
in thought or dede. .ii. ¶ The seconde loue is mo
re feruent for þ is so stronge / that what man loueth
in that degre all his thought herte & myght is so en
tyerly so besely & so perspyghtly stablyshed in Jhesu
cryste that his thought cometh neuer from hym but
whan he slepeth. .iii. ¶ The thyrde degre of loue
is hyghest and moost wonderfull / for what man cos
meth to that loue / all comferte and all solace is closed
oute of his herte / but onely the Joye of Jhesu cryste /
Other Joye may his herte not receyue for swetnesse
that he hath of the Joye euermore lastynge. This loue
is so brennyng & so gladyng that who io hath that
loue may as well fele the fyre of brennyng loue in his
soule / as an other man may fele his synger brenne in
erthely fyre. This loue may well be called a brennyng
ge loue. And yf men had suche swetnesse in the loue
of god of so late tyme I suppose wel þ þ same we may
haue now by the gyfte of god yf we were as feruent

in loue as they were. But these degrees of loue ben set
vpon so hyghe loue to god / that what man sholde ha-
ue the fyrst of these thre / behoued that he were a sad
contemplatyf man oz womā. And by cause mankyn
de is now & euermore the lenger the febler oz perauē-
ture more vnstable / therfore vnethes sholde we fynde
now a sad contemplatyf man oz woman. Men of re-
lyggyon haue taken dyuerse habytes of contemplatyf
lyfe. Men & womē also that ben enclosed as it semeth
lyuen a cōtemplatyf lyfe / & so in goddes grace they
do so for the more partye. But for to speke of hyghe
contemplatyf lyfe as holy men lyued before this ty-
me it semeth there ben ryght fewe. Therfore I trowe
that I may lykerly say that fewe there ben now that
wyl oz may trauayle now to haue suche hyghe degree
of loue as I haue reherced before. Neuertheles what
so euer thou be that redest oz herest this / be neuer to
flower to trauayll. For yf thy desyre be sette feruent
ly & louyngly holdynge the vnworthy to haue so hy-
ghe a ghoostly gyfte before an other man / & puttest
thy desyre to goddes dyspolycyon trustyngly he wyl
dyspose that is best for the / whether thou haste thy
desyre oz haue it not. But it is fyrst nedefull to þat
thou haue other thre degrees of loue that the same
holy men wrote in theyr treatyse / whiche be not of so
hyghe a degree as tho that be reherced before. .i.

The fyrst degree of these is / whā a man oz a womā
holdeth the commaundementes of god & kepeth hym
selfe out of dedely synne / & is stable in the fayth of ho-
ly chyrche. Also whan a mā wolde not for none erthe-
ly thyng displease god / but truly standeth in his de-
gree whether he be religyous oz seculer. In this ma-

net every man behoueth to loue his god that wyl be
saued/therfore I counseyll the to haue & kepe this lo
ue oꝝ thou clymbe to ony hyer degree. .ii. ¶ The se
conde degree is whan a man forsaketh all the worlde
for the loue of god/that is for to save his fader his mo
der & all his kynred & foloweth cryst in pouerte. Also
standeth nyght & daye/ how clene he may be in herte
howe chaste in body/ how meke & buxom/ howe clene
in all vertues/ & hate all byces/ so o that all his lyfe be
ghoostly & none thyng flesshely. .iii. ¶ The thyrde
degree is hyghest/ for that is a ful contemplatyfe lyfe
as whan a mā oꝝ a womā loueth for to be alone from
all maner noyse. And whan that he is saddely sette in
this lyfe and in this loue with his ghoostly eyen than
may he se in to the blyss of heuen. And than his eyen
be soo enlumyned and so clere lyghted with grace of
ghoostly loue and also thzough kyndeled with the gra
cyous fyre of crystes loue that he shall haue a maner
of bzennynge loue in his herte euer moze lastynge and
his thought euer moze bpwarde to god. ¶ Thus as I
haue reherced god hath vsyted his seruauntes gy
rynge theym a specyall sauour to loue hym by theyr
holy lyuynge. Many other men and women there be
whiche please god full well standynge truely in theyr
degree as men & women of the worlde/ both lordes &
ladyes & other husbonde men women & wyues. For al
be it they may not come to suche hye contēplatyfe lyfe
it suffyleth them to haue the fyrst degree of these thye
whiche I reherced last/ for that every man is bounde
to kepe. ¶ If thou desyre to haue an hygher degree of
loue in to the worshyp of god/trauayle as other men
wyde & aske helpe and grace with good perseueraūce

if it please god to performe thy wyl & bynge the to thy purpose. But for as moche as there be many that haue not a sadde grounde ne but lytell felynge how they sholde loue and drede god/whiche is spedefull & nedefull for all men to knowe. Therfore to suche as be not knowynge I wyl shewe fyrste in what maner they sholde loue & drede god/that they may be þ more stable in the loue of god. After that I shall shewe by the grace of god foure degrees of loue/whiche euery crysten man relygious & secular sholde holde and kepe & may performe for the more partye yf his wyl be feruently set to the loue of god. ¶ Now than as I sayd I shall in the begynnynge with the helpe of god wyte & shewe somwhat of the drede of god/that shal be to his worlshyp & proufyte to the redet.

Q What is drede/and how a man sholde drede god.

I Rede that þ drede of god is begynnynge of wysedom. ¶ Drede as clerkes haue wyten before this tyme is in many maners. But I suppose thre kyndes of drede be moost nedefull for to knowe. The fyrst is drede of man or drede of the worlde. The seconde is called drede of seruage. The thyrde is called a chastet drede or a frendely drede. .i. ¶ The fyrst whiche is drede of man or of the worlde is/whan a man or woman dredeth more the punysshynge of the worlde as betynge the body or prysynge than the punysshynge of the soule. Also whan a man dredeth more to lese his tempozall goodes in this passynge worlde than to lese the blysse without ende/this

ner euery man behoueth to loue his god that wyl be
saued/ therfore I counseyll the to haue & kepe this lo
ue or thou clymbe to ony hyer degree. ii. ¶ The se
conde degree is whan a man forsaketh all the worlde
for the loue of god/ that is for to save his fader his mo
der & all his kynred & foloweth cryst in pouerte. Also
standeth nyght & dawe/ how clene he may be in herte
howe chaste in body/ how meke & buxom/ howe clene
in all vertues/ & hate all vyces/ so o that all his lyfe be
ghoostly & none thyng flesshely. iii. ¶ The thyrde
degree is hyghest/ for that is a ful contemplatye lyfe
as whan a mā or a womā loueth for to be alone from
all maner noyse. And whan that he is saddely sette in
this lyfe and in this loue with his ghoostly eyen than
may he se in to the blyss of heuen. And than his eyen
be soo enlumyned and so clere lyghted with grace of
ghoostly loue and also thurgh kyndeled with the gra
cyous fyre of crystes loue that he shall haue a maner
of brennyng loue in his herte euermore lastyngeland
his thought euermore bywarde to god. ¶ Thus as I
haue reherced god hath vysyted his seruauntes gy
nyng theym a specyall sauour lo loue hym by theyr
holly lyuynge. Many other men and women there be
whiche pleale god full well standynge truly in theyr
degree as men & women of the worlde/ both lordes &
ladyes & other husbonde men women & wyues. For al
be it they may not come to suche hye contēplatye lyfe
it suffyleth them to haue the fyrst degree of these thye
whiche I reherced last/ for that euery man is bounde
to kepe. ¶ Yf thou desyre to haue an hygher degre of
loue in to the worshyp of god/ trauayle as other men
dyde & aske helpe and grace with good perseueraūce

if it please god to perfoyme thy wyll & byynge the to thy purpose. But for as moche as there be many that haue not a sadde grounde ne but lytell felynge how they sholde loue and drede god / whiche is spedefull & nedefull for all men to knowe. Therfore to suche as be not knowynge I wyll shewe fyrste in what maner they sholde loue & drede god / that they may be s^m more stable in the loue of god. After that I shall shewe by the grace of god foure degrees of loue / whiche euery crysten man relygyous & secular sholde holde and kepe & may perfoyme for the more partye of his wyll be feruently set to the loue of god. ¶ Now than as I sayd I shall in the begynnynge with the helpe of god wyte & shewe somwhat of the drede of god / that shal be to his worlhypp & proufyte to the reder.

Q What is drede / and how a man sholde drede god.

I Rede that s^m drede of god is begynnynge of wysedom. ¶ Drede as clerkes haue wyten before this tyme is in many maners. But I suppose thre kyndes of drede be moost nedefull for to knowe. The fyrst is drede of man or drede of the worlde. The seconde is called drede of seruage. The thyrde is called a chastid drede or a frendely drede. .i. ¶ The fyrst whiche is drede of man or of the worlde is / whan a man or woman dzedeth more the punysshynge of the worlde as betynge the body or prysoppynge than the punysshynge of the soule. Also whan a man dzedeth more to lese his tempozall goodes in this passynge worlde than to lese the blyss without ende / this

drede is couēted for nought. for god almyghty forbād
this drede whan he sayd thus. Dredeth hym not that
may sleē þe body. but rather drede hym that may sen-
de the body & soule in to euerlastyngē fyre. .ii.

And the seconde drede whiche is the drede of serua-
ge. is whā a man withdraueth hym or absteyneth hys
fro synne. more for drede of the payne of helle thā for
loue that he sholde haue to god. Euery suche mā what
goodnes he doth it is not for drede to lese euerlastyngē
blyssē whiche he desyred not. but for drede onely of
suffryngē of grete paynes whiche he dreded fore this
drede suffyleth not as thou shalt see afterwarde. but
yet it may be good & proufytable. .iii. **T**he thyr-
de drede whiche is called a chaste or a frendely drede
is. whan a man dredeth the longe abydyngē here for
grete desyre that he hath to be with god. Also whan
he dredeth that god wyl go fro hym. as peraduentu-
re he withdraueth his grace fro hym. Also whan he
dredeth to dysplease god for the grete loue & desyre þe
he hath for to please god. suche drede cometh of loue
& that pleaseth moche god. Take than hede how here
be reherced thre maner degrees of drede. sle the fyrst
for it is not proufytable. The seconde may be proufy-
table. for some men there be whiche drede god by cau-
se they sholde not be sente into hell to byenne there wth
the deuyls in euerlastyngē fyre. This drede may be
good for by this waye they may come in to the loue of
our lordē god as by this waye that I shall shewe. All
be it that thou drede our lordē god onely for payne yet
louest thou not god whome þe dredest. thou desyrest
not yet goodnes of vertues. but thou withstandest þe
wyckednes of byces. whā thou withstandest the wyc

kednes thou begynnest to desyre goodnes. Whā thou
desyrest goodenes & vertues / than cometh in to the
the thyrede maner of drede / whiche is called as I layd
a chaste or a frendely drede. For than thou dzedest to
lese the goodnes & grace that god hath put in þ / thou
dzedest thā also to lese the blyss that is ordeyned for
the / & so by this thou shalt drede god that he forsake
not the / whan thou dzedest god in this maner thenne
hast thou hym sykerly with the / & so for his loue thou
shalt desyre to be with hym. Thus mayst thou well
knowe how drede of god may byynge the in to the lo-
ue of god / yf thou loue god than thou hast wysedom /
so thus the drede of god is the begynnynge of wyle-
dom. Take hede than and drede god in the maner as
I haue reherced / for yf thou drede wel god thou shalt
not be slowe in his seruyce. He that dzedeth well god
leueth no goodnes vndo whiche he may do to the plea-
sure of god. Yf thou drede god thou wilt kepe his com-
maundementes / and the drede that thou hast to god
shall byynge the in to euerlastynge sykernes where þ
shalt neuer drede. Of the drede of god wereth a gres-
te deuocyon and a maner sorowe with full contrycōn
for synnes / thzugh that deuocōn and contrycon thou
forsakest thy synnes / and perauenture somwhat of
thy worldely goodes. By that forsakynge thou lowest
the to thy god & comest in to mekenes / thozugh mekes-
nes thy fleshely lustes ben destroyed / by þ destruccōn
all byces be put out & banyshed away / by puttyng
out of byces than vertues begyn to were and spryn-
ge. Of the shynynge of vertues the clenness of the her-
te is purchased. By clenness of thy herte thou shalt
come to full possellion of the holy loue of Cryst. By

these wordes thou mayst knowe howe þ shalte dꝛede
foꝛ loue / & how thou mayst come to loue thꝛough dꝛede
of god. But the moze loue encreaceth in the / the moze
dꝛede gooth from the / so that yf thou haue grace to co
me to a feruent loue thou shalt but ytell thynke on
dꝛede foꝛ the swetnesse that thou shalt haue in the lo
ue of god. but yet be thou neuer so parfyt it is nede
full that thou dꝛede discretely as longe as thou art in
this worlde / foꝛ as moche as I sayd thou mayst come
to loue yf thou dꝛede god / see now furthemoze what
is charyte & loue to god. How & in what maner thou
shalt loue hym / why thou shalt loue hym. How þ shalt
knowe whan god of his mercy graūteth the that gra
ce to conne loue hym.

Q What is charyte and how & why thou shalt lo
ue thy god.

A Of foure degrees of loue / & in the fyrst ben fy
ue poyntes.

Ordyned loue.

A Charyte as I rede is a loue that we sholde haue
to god / foꝛ as moche as he is almyghty god. al
so charyte is a loue wherby we sholde loue our neygh
bour as our selfe foꝛ god. And these be two pꝛyccpall
cōmaūdemētes of god. The fyrst longeth to þ loue of
god / whiche is þ grettest cōmaundement of þ lawe of
god. The seconde longeth to þ loue of thy neyghbour
and this is lyke to the fyrst / & thus thou hast what is
charyte and loue. See now how thou shalt loue god /
thou shalt loue god with all thy herte / all thy soule / &
with all vertue as thus. Whan þ puttest away from
the oꝛ withstandest with all thy power all thyng that

is pleasynge or lpyng to thy flesshe for the loue of þ
blessyd flesshe of cryste / than thou louest hym with al
thy herte & al thy soule. Of this mater thou shalt her
more afterwarde / but le now ferthermore how thou
shalt loue hy. ¶ The causes why thou shalt loue god
ben without nombze haufge rewarde to his benefay
tes / but two causes we haue pryncypally aboue other
One is for he loueth vs fyrst with all his herte and al
his soule swetely & strongely. Swetely whan he toke
flesshe & blood & became mā for oure loue. Strongly
whan he suffred deth for loue of man. The seconde
cause is / for ther is no thyng that may be loued mo
re ryghtfully ne more proufytable. More ryghtfull is
ther none than the loue of hym that made man and
deyed for man. More proufytable thyng is there no
ne that may be loued than almyghty god / for yf we lo
ue hym as we be bounde / he wyl gyue vs Joye and
blyss without ende / where no thyng lacketh but all
thyng is plenteuous and cuerlastyge. Se now how
thou shalt knowe whā god putteth grace in the for to
knowe loue. Whan the trauayle whiche thou hast for
the loue of god is lyght & lpyng to the / than thou be
gynnest to haue sauour in the loue of god. For ther is
no maner trauayle greuous ne trauaylous to hym þ
loueth god feruently & trauayleth wylfully for the lo
ue of god. ¶ Also stedfast loue seleth no bytternesse /
but all swetenesse. for ryght as bytternesse is syster to
the byce of hatred / right so swetenesse is syster to þ ber
tue of loue so that in loue is all swetenesse. ¶ Also the
trauayle of louers may be in no maner trauaylous ne
greuous. For ryght as hawkers & hunters what euer
trauayle they haue it greueth them not for the loue &

lykynge that they haue in theyr game / ryghth so what
thyng it be that a man loueth & taketh vpon hym a
trauayle for that thyng that he loueth or elles it is no
trauayle / and yf it be trauaylous it lyketh hym to ha
ue trauayle for y thyng whiche he loueth. Take than
good hede of these wordes. for yf thou loue god thou
wylt gladly trauayle & suffre for y loue of god / yf thy
trauayle semeth than lyght to the / or ellys yf thou lo
uest or desyrest gladly to haue trauayle for the loue of
god thou mayst wel knowe that god of his grace hath
put in the a begynnynge to come to loue. Whan thou
hast suche a gracyous begynnynge withdraue not y
loue from hym for no maner dysleale that may fall to
the. for many men & women there be that whyle they
be in prosperyte / that is to say / whyle they be in welth
& in rest gladly they wyl shewe loue to god suche as
they can. But yf god sendeth hym ony dysleale or ony
maner of chastyllynge anone her loue swageth & that
is no sadde loue. for who so loueth trustyngly & lady
ly he loueth as well in his aduersyte as in prosperyte /
for what god sendeth to vs it is for our proufyte / ther
fore be it helth be it wo y he sendeth we sholde hertely
thanke hym & not withdraue our loue from hym for
no nede that he hath to our loue / but for grete profyte
that we sholde haue to loue hym / & for his grete good
nes that he wyl chastyle vs here all for our better.
Thus than haue I shewed in fewe wordes what is
charyte & loue to thy god / howe thou shalt loue hym /
why thou shalt loue hym / and how thou shalt knowe
whan thou hast grace to conne loue hym. Lerne than
thus to loue & se now ferther moze what proufyte and
grace cometh of loue. ¶ In the loue of god ben fyue

gracious thynges fyre / lyght / hony / wyne / & sonne.

i. ¶ The fyrst is fyre cleynynge the soule of all maner byces thurgh holy medytacyons. ii. ¶ The seconde is lyght ihynynge in the soule with clerenes of vertues thourgh holy prayers. iii. ¶ The thyrde is hony makynge swete the ioule whan he hath in mynde the benefaytes & þe grete gyftes of god almyghty / & yeldynge to hym thankynge. iiij. ¶ The fourth is wyne fulfyllynge þe soule with a grete gladnes thourough a swete contemplacyon. v. ¶ The fyfth is a sonne makynge the soule clere with a ihynynge lyght in myrthe withouten ende & gladynge the soule with an easy herte in Joye & blyss euermore lastyng. Thus thou mayst see what proufite he shall haue that can well loue. God than of his grete grace graunte vs hy so to loue as it is moost to hym pleasynge. Amen.

¶ Now fethermore I wyll shewe to the as I sayd before. foure degrees of loue whiche thou mayst kepe & easely come to one after an other yf thou haue good wyll.

Foure degrees of loue there be / the fyrst is called an ordeyned loue or els ordeynat loue / that is to saye a loue ordeyned to be knowen and kept of all maner men & women of euery degree in the worlde. To this degree of loue longen. v. poyntes to be kepte. The fyrst is thou shalt loue thy selfe onely that it be susteyned. The.ii. is that thou loue the worlde to no seruyshe. The.iii. is that thou loue thy neyghbour for god. The.iiii. is that thou loue thy frende for his good lyuynge. The.v. is to loue thyn enemye for the more meede of god.

E The fyrst is that thou shalt loue thy flesshe one ly that it be susteyned.

The fyrste poynte is as I sayd thou shalt loue thy flesshe onely that it be susteyned as thus. Thou shalt take mete & drynke clothynge and al other thyng that is nedefull to thy body / in resonable maner to kepe thy body in his estate in comforte of thy soule to trauaile & contynue in the seruyce of god / & not for to nouryshe thy flesshe in lust & lykynge with dyuerse delycate metes & drynkes / for ther of cometh foule stynkynge synne & many bodyly sykennes / namely whan ther is to moche excesse. This wytnelseth an holy clerke & sayth / they that delyted them in lustes of the flesshe they haue ful often many dysleases in theyr flesshe. Also as I rede a soule that is wonte to delytes of the flesshe gadzeth togyder many fylthes and wyckednes. Thou mayst also do no excres / for yf thou vse the to excesse / thou fallest in to the vyce of glotony / whiche thou knowest well is dedely synne. Of þ synne I rede thus / where þ vyce of glotony repugneth in ony man he leleth þ ghoostly strength yf he had ony before. And but yf the wombe of glotony be swaged all his vtues ben cast downe / therfore loue thy flesshe to sustentacyon & not to delytes & to excelle / for here thou mayst well knowe & se that it is good & nedefull to flee delycacyes. But thou shalt vnderstande here þ I counseylie the not to forbere ony mete or drynke in specpall / for the vyce of delycacye is not in the mete / but in þ lust that thou hast in mete / therfore sayth an holy clerke. Often we take deynste metes without blame & somtyme other metes and comyn to euery man

not without gylte of cōſcyence. So thus it ſemeth wel
whan we take ony mete for delyte more than for iuſte
naūce we offende god / therfore flee delytes & luſtes of
mete & drynke and loue thy fleſhe onely that it be ſu-
ſteyned / & than thou haſt the fyrſt poynte of this de-
gree of loue.

A The ſeconde is thou ſhalt loue the worlde to
no ſuperfluyte.

The ſeconde poynte is thou ſhalt loue the worl-
de to no ſuperfluyte. As thus yf thou loue god
thou ſhalt not deſyre ne loue banytees of the worlde /
ne worldey goodes more than þe nedeth. Yf god hath
ordeyned the to an hyghe degree in the worlde / as for
to be a lord or a lady / or for to haue ony ſoueraunte
ghooſtly or worldey / by reaſon reuerence muſt be do-
ne to the more than to an other man or woman. For af-
ter that the fyrſt man Adā was inobedyent to goddel
cōmaūdemēt it was ordeyned by almyghty god that
man ſholde be ſubget to mā. Alſo for as moche as þe
people muſt haue gouernaūce / therfore it is reaſon to
do reuerence to them that haue power & gouernaūce
aboue other. But all be it þe be grete & worldey wor-
ſhyy muſt be do to the / loue it not ne deſyre it not but
mekely yelde all þe worſhyy to god whiche myghtha-
ue made the a ſubget there he hath ordeyned the a lord
or a ſoueraunte / & thurgh that lowneſſe thou ſhalt ha-
ue ſome grace to withſtande þe deſyre of worldey ba-
nytees. I ſaye ſerthermore / yf thou loue the worlde to
none ſuperfluyte / þe ſhalt not deſyre ne loue worlde-
ly good more than the nedeth. As thus thou knoweſt

well ynough in thy begynnyng whether thou art lord
or subgett/ poore or ryche/ holde the apayde with thy
degree so that thou haue thy sustenance/ & desyre to
be no greter/ but onely as goddes wyll is & as he wyll
dyspoule for the. yf thou holde the not payde with that
that god hath sente to the and to thyn a resonable ly
uelode/ but euer desyrest for to be greter and greter in
the worlde than thou louest the worlde to superfluyte
for thou desyrest more than thou nedest & soo by that
foule desyre thou fallest in to the vyce of couetyse whi
che is repreued by goddes lawe as a foule dedely syn
ne. This synne is full peryllous/ for I rede where that
the synne of couetyse is in a man & man is made sub
gett to all other vices. I fynde also that couetyse and
pyde be as it were one vyce or one wyckednes/ in so
moche that yet where pyde reygneeth there is couety
se/ & where couetyse reygneeth there is pyde/ this vy
ce is so wycked & so greuous & as longe as it reygneeth
in any man he shal haue no grace for to drawe to god
warde. This wytnesseeth well a full holy clerke saynt
Gregorye & sayth thus in an Omelye. That in none
other wyle we may ne can neuer come ne drawe to &
begynner & maker of all goodnes/ but that we caste
awaye frome vs the synne of couetyse whiche is rote
of all euylles. Than it semeth well yf thou wilt come
to the loue of god thou must flee the synne of couetyse
¶ There thynge there be in the worlde as I rede whi
che men desyre aboue all other worldely thynges The
fyrst is rychesse. The seconde is lustes. And & thyrde
is worshyp. Of rychesse cometh wycked dedes. Of lu
stes cometh foule dedes. And of worshyp cometh va
nytees. Ryches engendzeth couetyse. lustes noyssheth

glotony & lecherie / & worshyp nor sheth boost & pry
de. Thus thou mayst knowe what peryll it is to loue
the worlde more than nede is / & than thou shalt kepe
the seconde poynte of this degree.

O The thyrde is thou shalt loue thy neyghboure
for god.

The thyrde poynte is howe thou shalt loue thy
neyghboure for god / to this thou arte bounde
by the comaundement of god where he comaundeth &
sayth / thou shalt loue thy neyghboure as thy selfe / yf
thou shalt loue hym as thy selfe nedes thou must lo
ue hym / thou shalt loue hym also for god. Of this lo
ue spekeith saynt Austyn & sayth / thou shalt loue god
for hym selfe with all thy herte / & thy neyghboure for
god as thy selfe / that is to saye / loke where to and for
what thou louest thy selfe so thou shalt loue thy neygh
boure. Thou shalt loue thy selfe in all goodnesse & for
god / ryght so thou shalt loue thy neyghboure for god
& in all goodnes but in none euill / therfore sayth the
same clerke. He that loueth men & is to saye his neygh
bours he loueth o / sholde loue them for they ben good
& ryghtfull o / els that they may be good & ryghtfull /
& that is to saye thou shalt loue them in god o / els for
god / & in this maner euery man sholde loue hymselfe
Also of the loue of thy neyghbour I rede whan thou
forsakest a synguler prouffyte for & loue of thy neygh
bour tha & louest thy neyghbour. Also thou louest thy
neyghbour as thy selfe wha thou doost hym no harme
but desyrest the same good nes & prouffyte ghoodly &
bodely to hym that & desyrest to thy selfe. Loue thus

b .iii.

thy neyghbour or els þ̄ louest not god. To this accor-
deth an holy clerke & sayth. By the loue of god the lo-
ue of thy neyghbour is purchased / & by þ̄ loue of thy
neyghbour the loue of god is nourysshed for he þ̄ tak-
eth no hede to loue his neyghbour he can not loue his
god. But whan thou hast fyrste sauour in loue of thy
neyghbour / than thou begynnest to entre in to þ̄ loue
of god. Loue thus thy neyghbour for god & thā thou
kepest the thyrde poynte of this degree of loue.

A The fourth is thou shalt loue thy frende for his
good lyuyng.

The fourth poynte is / thou shalt loue thy fren-
de for his good lyuyng. Yf thou haue a frende
that is of good lyuyng / thou shalt loue hy in double
maner / for he is thy frende and for the goodnes that
is in hym / yf he be not good of lyfe but vycious thou
mayst loue hy but not his byces. For as I rede parfyt
te frendshyp is whan thou louest not in thy frende þ̄
sholde not be loued / and whan thou louest in hym or
desyrest to hy goodnes whiche is to be loued. As thus
though it be so þ̄ thy frende lyueth so folysshly thou
shalt not loue hym foly lyuyng but that he may by
goddes grace amende hym and be parfyt in lyuyng
For what man it be þ̄ loueth hymselfe in folye he shal
not prouffyte in wysedom. Also the same clerke sayth
in an other place loueth not the byces of your frēdes
yf ye loue your frendes. Loue than thy frende for his
good lyuyng / & than thou shalt kepe the fourth poynt
of this degree of loue.

I The fyfthe is thou shalt loue thyn ennemye for
the moze mede.

In the seconde degree of loue ben thye poyntes
Cleme loue.

The fyfth poynte is thou shalt loue thyn enne-
mye for the moze mede. A grete dede of cha-
ryte it is & medeful to forgyue them þ haue trespased
ayenst vs w all our herte. **I**t is but lytell goodnes
& full lesse mede to be wel wyllynge to hym that doth
the no harme / but it is a grete goodnes & a greter me-
de that thou be well louynge to thyn ennemye. And þ
thou do good & wyll good with all thy power to hym
that doth euyl or is in wyll to do euyl to the with all
his power. Of this mater speketh an holy clerke and
sayth. It is holden a grete vertue amonge worldely
men to suffre paciently theyr ennemyes / but it is a
greter vertue a man to loue his enemye / for that ver-
tue is presented as for sacrefyce befoze the syght of al
myghty god. Also to this purpose accorde the wordes
of cryst where he sayd to his dyscyples. Loue your en-
nemyes / do good to theym that hate you / & praye for
them þ puth ewe you to dyscase / & for them þ despyse
you that we may be the chyldzen of the fader in heuē.
Loue than thyn enemye for þ moze mede yf þ wylt ke-
pe þ fyfth poynt of this fyrst degree of loue. **S**hort-
ly thus ben declared to the the fyue poyntes of þ fyrst
degree of loue. In the fyrste yf thou take good hede
thou art warned and counseyled for the loue of god /
and as thou art bounde by all crysten lawes to with-
stande the synne of glotonye & al other flesshely lustes
In the seconde poynte to withstande þ foule byce of

couetyse pryde & all other vanytees of the worlde. In the thre last poyntes to loue thy neyghbour thy fren-
de & all other men for the loue of god and for the more
mede. Loue than god in this fyrst maner of loue/ and
thou shalt thurgh his grete grace yf thou wylt come
to the seconde degree of loue.

The seconde degree of loue is called a cleue loue
yf thou wylt come to this seconde degre of lo
ue thou must kepe thre poyntes. The fyrste is/ þ thou
loue no vyce with vertue. The seconde is þ thou despy
se all euyl custome. The thyrde is that thou sette not
lytell by synne whether it be lytell or grete.

H The fyrste poynte is thou shalt loue no vyce
with vertue.

The fyrst poynte is/ thou shalt loue no vyce w
th vertue. As thus what euer thou be in niannes
syght/ beware that thou be not bycypous Inwarde in
thy soule vnder colour of vertues whiche þ she west o-
penly. Our ghoolstly ennemye þ fende hath many sub
tyltees to dysceyue mankynode. But amonge all this
it is a grete dyscepte/ whā that he maketh a vyce lyke
to vertue & vertue lyke to vyce. This thou mayst see
by ensample. for all be it that mercy is a grete vertue
where þ it is keppe & in þ worlshyp & in þ name of god
yet it is bycypous where it is do in worlshyp of man &
not of god. Also where vertue of ryghtwylnes is toug
ned in to byces / whan it is do for worldely couetyse
or els for anger or inpayence. The vyce also of pryde
is hyd somtyme vnder mekenesse. As whan a man lo
weth & meketh hymself in speche and in berynge to be

holde meke & lowely. Pacyence also semeth in many a
man whan there is none. As whan a man wolde take
vengeaunce yf he myght for the wronge that is do to
hym/ but for he may not/ or els he hath no tyme to wre
ke hym on his enemye/ for that cause he suffreth & not
for the loue of god By these ensamples & many other
thou mayst well knowe that vyces somtyme be lyke
to vertues. To this accordeth saynt Jheroni & sayth
thus. A grete & an hyghe connyng it is to knowe vy
ces & vertues. for all be it that vyces & vertues be co
traryous. yet they be so lyke that vnnethe the vertue
may be knowe from the vyce. ne þ vyce fro the vertue
Beware therfore & loue so sadly vertues without ony
saynyng that þ hate all maner vyces/ and so þ mayst
kepe the fyrst poynte of this degree of loue.

I The seconde is þ shalt hate all euyl customes.

The seconde poynt is thou shalt despyse all euyl
customes. A grete peryll it is to haue an euyl
dede in custome. for as I rede synnes be they neuer
so grete ne so horryble/ whan they be drawe in to custo
me they seme but lytell to theym that vse suche synne
in custome/ in so moche that it is to them a grete lyk
ge to tell and shewe theyr wyckednes to al other men
without ony shame. Of this & suche vblage speketh an
other holy clerke & sayth. Whan synne cometh so in
vse that the herte hath a lust & a lykynge ther in/ that
synne shall ful sayntly be withstande. for whan a syn
ne is brought in to custome it byndeth soze the herte &
maketh the soule bowe to hym that it may not ryle a
gayne & come in to the ryght waye of sene lyfe. for

whan he is in wyll to ryse/ānone he slydeth & falleth
agayne. For this sayth the same clerke in an other pla
ce. Many there be þ̄ desyren to come out of synne/ but
for as moche as they ben closed in the pryson of euyl
custome they may not come out from theyr wycked ly
uynge. ¶ Also to this purpose I rede that he þ̄ bleseth h̄
not to vertue in his yonge age he shal not conne with
stande byces in his olde age. Thus þ̄ mayst well se þ̄
yf thou be bled in ony synne it wyll be full harde to w̄
stande it. And but thou leue all maner synne to thy
power þ̄ hast none clene loue to thy god/ therfore with
stande all maner synne & take none in custome/ thā þ̄
shalt kepe the seconde poynt of this degree of loue.

¶ The thyrde is thou shalt not sette lyght by syn
ne be it neuer so lytell.

¶ In the thyrde degree of loue be fyue poyntes:
¶ Steadfast loue.

¶ The thyrde poynte is/ thou shalt not sette lyght
by synne/ as thus. What euer synne it be lytel
or grete/ drede it ryght dyscretly in thy cōscyence and
set not lytell there by. For as I rede what man þ̄ pas
seth melure in takynge of his lyuelode as often more
than hym nedeth that mā offendeth god/ this semeth
to many men full lytell trespas. But this holy man
saynt Austyn sayth. It is no lytell synne for as moche
as we trespas euery daye there in for the more partye
In as moche as we synne therin euery day we synne
therin often/ & by that we multeplye our synes & that
is full peryllous/ therfore it is full nedeful to drede al
suche venyall synnes & sette not lytell by theym. Also

benyall synnes be they neuer so lytell / they be moche
 to be dradde. As the same clerke sheweth by ensample
 of lytell bestes whete they be many to gyder / be they
 neuer so lytell yet they slee & do moche harme. Also
 granes of lande be full lytell / but yet where a thyp is
 ouer charged with lande it must nedes synke or dzen
 che. Ryght so it fareth by the synnes be they neuer so
 lytell they be full peryllous. For but yf a mā be rather
 ware & put theym awaye they shall make hym for to
 synne dedly. Therfore yf thou wylt haue a clene loue
 to god / charge in thy conspience euery synne lytell &
 grete & withstand in the begynnynge & put it out as
 soone as god wylt gyue to the grace with contrycyon
 confessyon & som almes dedes. And than thou shalt ke
 pe the thyrde poynte of this degree of loue. Here is re
 herced the mater of these poyntes. ¶ Thus ben decla
 red the thre poyntes of the seconde degre of loue. In
 the fyrste thou art counseyled to loue all vertues and
 hate all vyces. In the seconde poynte that thou haue
 no synne in vblage but that thou voyde it soone & that
 thou hate all other euyl custome. In the thyrde poynt
 that thou art not to lyght of conspēce / but that thou
 beware & drede euery synne lytell & grete by counseyl
 of thy confessor. Yf thou kepe thus these poyntes for
 the loue of god than thou louest god in the seconde de
 gree of loue / that is to saie in a clene loue. Loue than
 saddely in this degree / & by goddes grace thou shalt
 the soner come to the thyrde degree of loue.

¶ The thyrde degree of loue is called a stedfast lo
 ue. Yf thou wylt come to this degre of loue y
 must kepe fyue poyntes. The fyrste is thou shalt loue

god with all thy desyre. The secōde is what euer thou do thyinke vpon the worlthyp & drede of god. The thyrde is thou shalt do no synne vpon trust of other good dedes. The fourth is thou shalt rule the so dyscretly & thou fayle not for noo feruent wyll. The fyfth is that thou fall not from thy good luyngge for feynthe herte or by temptacyon.

A The fyrste is thou shalt loue god with all thy desyre.

The fyrste poynt is thou shalt loue god with all thy desyre / thou mayst not loue stedfastly but thou loue with all thy desyre. An holy desyre it is to desyre the presence of almyghty god for the grete loue that thou haste to god. Suche an holy desyre is soo acceptable to god as I rede / that what man hathe a grete desyre all be it he speke not with the tonge / he cryeth full loude with the tonge of his herte. And that not desyareth how euer he loueth to our syght outwarde / or speketh to our herynge he loueth not in his hert & as a dombe man he is to fore god whiche may not be herde. Of suche holy desyre I rede also the lenger that loue lacketh whiche is so sore desyred & moze feruent is his desyre whiche abydeth & that desyre begynneth to brenne thozugh strength of & desyrynge loue / in so moche that though the body or the fleshe fayle & desyre is nouryshed & encreaced. To this accordeth saynt Gregorye & sayth / holy desyres wexen & encreasen in tarynge & abydyge / for where desyres fayle in abydynge there is no sad desyre. Thus than loue god stedfastly with all thy desyre / & so thou shalt kepe the

fyfste poynte of this degre of loue.

O The seconde is thou shalt in the begynnynge of thy werkes thynke on the worlhypp & drede of god

The seconde poynte is what euer thou do thyvke vpon the worlhypp & drede of god. If thou kepe this thou shalt the moze sykerly lyue to goddes pleasure. For what dede thou art in wyll to perfourme in worlhypp of god thou mayst be syker of grete mede. Also yf thou drede god thou art aferde for to do o ny thyng that sholde be dyspleasyng to hym / & for as moche as þu dredest thou doost it not. Soo by that drede thou leuest that thyng vndo whiche shold tourne the in to grete peryll of thy soule yf it had ben perfourmed in dede. By this thou mayst wel knowe that it is full spedfull to thynke in þ begynnynge of all thy werkes vpon the worlhypp & drede of god. To this accordeth the techynge of saynt Poule where he sayth thus. What euer ye do in worde or in dede / do it in the name of our lord Ihesu cryst. For he that begynneth all thyng in þ name of almyghty god he begynneth in the worlhypp of god. Loue thā so stedfastly almyghty god / that what euer thou shalt do thynke fyrst in þ worlhypp & drede of god / & thus thou shalt kepe the seconde poynte of this degre of loue.

O The thyrde is thou shalt do no synne vpon trust of other good dedes.

The thyrde poynt is thou shalt do no synne vpon trust of other good dedes. What man that

synneth wylfully he neyther loueth ne dzedeth god. yf
thou synne vpon trust of ony goodnes wylfully thou
synnest so in þ þ louest not stedfastly. ¶ To this pur
pose I rede also that he is full bnkynde that is full of
bertues & dzedeth not god. Also a grete folye & a gre
te pryde it is for to synne vpon trust of ony good de
des. for he thou neuer so full of bertues or goodnes/
bnkyndnes to thy god may destroye all tho bertues
More bnkyndenenes mayst thou not shewe thā dysplea
se god wylfully/whiche is begynner and gyuer of all
goodnes/beware therfore & flee suche bnkyndnes/ &
do no synne vpon trust of other good dedes. ¶ Of suche
bnkyndenesse also it is nedefull for to beware/for the
more acceptable thou art to god thozugh thy good ly
uynge/þ more culpable shalt thou be yf that thou fall
agayne in to synne and in to euyll lyuynge. ¶ And of
this thou hast ensample of Adam. for as moche as he
was fulfylled fyrst with goodnes/therfore his trespas
was moche the more whan that he fell in to synne.

¶ Also I rede þ it is but a sclyder hope where a man
synneth vpon trust for to be laued / for he that so doth
he neyther loueth ne dzedeth god. And but yf that we
loue and dzed god to our connyng or knowynge we
may not be laued / therfore it is more spedefull for to
dzed well than to trust amys. Also it is more prouffy
table a man to holde hymselfe lowe & feble than to de
syre to be holden stronge/and for feblenes to fal and
be lost. Take hede than what goodnes that god put
teth in the and thanke hym mekely & praye hym of
contynuaunce/ & doo no synne by trust of other good
dedes. And thus thou shalt kepe the thyrd poynte of
this degree of loue.

Q. ¶ The fourth is thou shalt rule the dyscretly that
thou sayle not for none feruent wyl.

A The fourth poynt is thou shalt rule the so dys-
cretly that thou sayle not to feruent wyl. To
kepe this it is nedefull to the to haue the vertue of dis-
crecyon as thus. Yf thou take for þy loue of god so mo-
che abstinence wakyng or other bodely penaunce þ
thou mayst not for feblenes contynue to trauayle in þ
seruyce of god/ than is thy wyl to feruent. for be thy
loue neuer so grete god is not pleased whan þ rulest þ
in suche maner that thou mayst not abyde in his seruy-
ce thzugh thy myscule. Therfore beware and rule the
by reason/ take nomore vpon the than thou mayst be-
re/ bely not the to folow other stronge men or women
of olde tyme in doyng of penaunce otherwyle thā thy
strength wyl aske. And gouerne thy lyuynge by good
counseyll that thou sayle not thzugh thyn owne folye
for almyghty god of his endeles mercy hath ordey-
ned heuens blyss to the synfull men thzugh dedes of
charyte & of mekenes where they be done in mesure
and with dyscrecyon. The deuyl is so enuyous to mā-
kynde that somtyme he styreth an vnpartyte man or
woman to fast more than he may begynne thynges of
hyghe perfeccyons haupnge no regarde to his febles-
nesse/ in sood moche that whan his bodely strength be-
gynneth to fayle eyther he must cōtynue that he hath
begonne so folysly for shame of men/ or ellys vterly
leue all for feblenesse. To this accordeyth saynt Au-
styn and sayth. Our wycked ennemye the deuyl hath
not a more spedefull engyn to drawe the loue of god
from mannes herte/ than to take vs by his fals sug-

gestyon to loue vnwysely & without reason / that is to
saye as I sayd before. To styre vs for to take fastyns
ges wakynges and other bodely penaunces ouer our
myght. Take therfore to the dyscrecyon & rule the so
dyscretly that thou sayle not for to feruent wyll / and
than thou mayst kepe the fourth poynte of this degre
of loue.

R The fyfthe is thou shalt not leue thy good lyuynge
for feynthe ne for temptacyon.

The fyfthe poynte is / thou shalt not fall fro thy
good lyuynge for feynthe herte ne for tempta-
cyon. To kepe well this poynt it is nedefull to haue a
perseueraunt wyll & a stable hert ayenst all temptacy-
ons. Some men there be whan ony heuynesse bodely
or ghoostly or whan that ony grutchynge of the flesh
cometh to theym / anone they ben so heuy & so full of
vnlust that they leue theyr ghoostly trauayle & fal fro
theyr good lyuynge / suche men haue no stable ne sted-
fast herte. Therfore yf thou wylt loue god stedfastly
suffre no heuynesse ne dysleale ne chaunge thy trauayle
ne thy herte fro thy seruyce and loue of god / but take
hede of the wordes of almyghty god where he sayth.
He is blesyd that is perseueraunt vnto his lyues ende
Here of thou hast ensamples of holy martyrs & cofes-
sours whiche neuer wolde be departed fro the loue of
god for all the persecucyon that myght be do to them
Also to suche men of feble herte & vnlust speketh saynt
Bernarde and sayth thus. Whan thou art vnlusty or
dyslealed with heuynesse / haue none vntrust therfore
ne leue not thy trauayle / but suffre mekely & aske con-

forte of hym that is begynner & tender of all goodnes
And all be it that thou haue not suche deuocyon than
as in other tymes / thynke well how he that gaf þe
che deuocyon hath withdrawen it for thy defaultes as
for a tyme / & happely to the more mede / therfore wth
stande all suche heuynes and stande strongly / suffre
lowely / & take gladly the chastysynge of god / & euer
more aske helpe & grace. Ferthermore some for defau
te of knowynge & for vnstabilenes haue fall thorough
trauayle of temptacyons / therfore whan thou art soo
trauayled with ony temptacyons that shold be lettyn
ge / or els is dyedefull to the / chaunge not therfore thy
wyl / but stande stedfastly & shewe thy displease to thy
ghoostly fader askynge of hym to gyue the suche coun
seyll that may be moost helppynge to thy soule. ¶ If thou
do thus mekely with a ful good wyl to please thy god
& to withstande the temptacyons of thyn enemye the
grace of the holy ghoost wyl fully fulfyll bothe hym
& the / hym for to teche / the for to lerne / & take of hym
suche counseyll that shall be moost strength & confor
te to the & confusyon to the deuyl. And so by the helpe
of god thou shalt be confortyd in suche maner that þe
shalt not fall thorough trauayle of temptacyons / but
euer the lenger the more stable and the more stronge
in the loue of god to thy lyues ende. Thus than take
hede that thou fall not from thy good lyuynge for feyn
te herte ne by temptacyons / and than thou mayst ke
pe the fyfth poynte of this degree of loue. ¶ Here is
shortly declared the mater of these fyue poyntes.
¶ Thus be declared the fyue poyntes of the thyrde
degree of loue. In the fyrste thou art taught to loue
god wth full desyre. In the seconde for to do all thyng

in þ worſhypp of almyghthy god / and euer for to drede
god in the begynnynge of all thy werkes. In the thyr
de fully to withſtande all maner synne / and no synne
for to do bpō trust of other good dedes. In the fourth
that thou fall not for defaute of dyscrecyon. In the
fifth thou art taught & counſeylled for to haue a ſta-
ble herte and for to withſtande all temptacyons that
thou fall not from thy good luyng. Yf þ kepe thus
theſe fyue poyntes than thou haſt the thyrde degree
of loue / whiche is called a ſtedfaſt loue to god. And yf
thou loue god ſtedfaſtly thou mayſt ſoone come to p-
feyn / and ſo by the grace of god thozugh encreace
of vertues thou ſhalt lyghtly come to the fourth de-
gree of loue.

In the fourth degree of loue ben. viii. poyntes.

Parfyte loue.

Show by encreace of vertues thou mayſt come
to parfeyn.

The fourth degree of loue is called a parfeyte lo-
ue. An other loue there is all be it I make noo
mencon but of foure / whiche is called moost parfeyte
loue. Of that loue ſpeketh ſaynt Auſtyn & ſayth. Cha-
ryte is parfeyte in ſome men & inparfeyte in ſome men.
But þ charyte that is moost parfeyte may not be had
here whyle we lyue in this worlde. Of the ſame moost
parfeyte loue ſpeketh the ſame clerke thus. In the ful
fyllynge of the countre of charyte / that is to ſaye / in
fulfyllynge of heuen where that all is loue and chary-
te. This commaundement of god ſhall be fulfyllled
where he ſayth / þ ſhalt loue thy loʒde god with al thy

herte / with all thy mynde / and with all thy soule. For
whyle ony fleshely desyre is in man god may not be
loued with all the herte and full mynde. And by this
thou mayst knowe that there is a passynge loue whi-
che may not be fulfilled in this worlde / and that may
well be called moost parfyte loue. But here perauens-
ture some man wyl aske / why it is commaundeth /
but it myght be performed in this worlde. To that
the same clerke answereth and sayth / that it is skyls
full that suche a perfeccyon sholde be commaunded /
and this he sheweth by ensample in this wyle. Ryght
as no man may renne euen and sykerly but he knowe
whether he shall renne. In the same maner noo man
sholde knowe his moost parfyte loue / but it hadde
be shewed in the commaundementes of god. Yf noo
man hadde knowen it no man wolde haue laboured
hym to come therto. ¶ Now sythen it is so we knowe
it well that it is moost parfyte loue we must nedeful
loue it and sette vs in a redy waye whyle we be here
that wyl bynge vs euen to that moost parfyte loue.
A more syker waye is there none in this worlde than
the waye of parfyte loue. Wherefore I counsell the to
haue this fourth degree of loue whiche is called a par-
fyte loue that we may come the more sykerly to par-
fyte loue. ¶ Of parfyte loue speketh Saynt Au-
styn and sayth. He that is redy to deye gladly for his
brother in hym is parfyte loue. To this acordeth the
wordes of Cryste where he sayth. No man hath mo-
re charyte in this worlde than he that putteth his sou-
le for his frendes / that is to saye than he that gyueth
gladly his lyfe for the loue of god to wyne his fren-

des soule. This loue is the grettest loue in this worlde/
a many there be I tro we thugh the gyfte of god that
haue this parfyte loue/ but yf it thynke the harde to
come to suche an hyghe loue/ be therfore not agast.
For other parfyte loue there is wherein thou mayst lo
ue parfytly thy god as I fynde by the techynge of an
holy clerke where he counseylleth in this wyle. **T**elde
we vs to god of whome we be made/ and lustre we not
theym to haue the maystrye ouer vs whiche ben not
of so grette value as we be/ but rather haue we þ may
strye ouer theym. As thus/ lette reason haue the may
strye ouer byces/ lette the body be subiect to the soule
and lette the soule be subiect to god/ a than is all þ par
feccyon of man fulfilled. Thus we sholde lyue by rea
son as þ same clerke sheweth by ensample/ for as we
put lyuely thynges before them þ be not lyuely. Also as
we put wyttly thynges before them that haue no wytte
ne reason. Also ryght as we putte tho that ben not de
dely before theym that ben deedly/ ryght so yf we wyl
lyue parfytly we must putte proufytable thynges be
fore theym that ben lusty and lykynge. Also put them
that ben honest before theym that ben proufytable.
Also putte theym that ben holy before them that ben
honest. And put all thynges that ben parfyte before
them that ben holy. Take hede thā of this/ for yf thou
wylt lyue after this techynge thā thou mayst lyue par
fytely/ yf thou lyue parfytely þ that loue parfytely ly
ue than thus a thou shalt come to parfyte loue. But
for as moche as it is full harde to come so sodaynly to
suche a parfyte loue/ therfore take hede to tho thre de
grees of loue whiche ben reherced before/ a begynne

to lyue sadly in the fyrste / & than from þ̄ fyrst clymbe
hy to the seconde / & fro the seconde to the thyrde / & yf
thou be sadly stabled vpon the thyrde thou shalt lygh
tely come to þ̄ fourth where is all perfeccyon / yf thou
haue perfeccyon thou shalt lyue perfytely. Begyn thā
at the fyrst degree of loue / & so encrease in loue & ver
tues yf thou wylt come to this degree of parfyte loue
¶ I rede that some men begyne to be vertuous / som
encrease in vertues / and some be parfyte in vertues.
Wght so it fareth by the loue of god as soone as thou
art in wyl & begynest to loue god / that loue is not yet
parfyte but thou must stande fast & nouryshe þ̄ wyl /
& yf it be well nourysshed it wyl wepe stronge / & yf it
hath full strength than it is parfyte. ¶ To this purpo
se I rede also that no mā may be sodaynly in so hyghe
a degree / but euery man that lyueth in good couerla
cion / whiche may not be without loue they must begyn
ne at the lowest degree yf they wyl come to an hyghe
perfeccyon. Thus thā good brother oz syster whether
thou be withstāde all byces / and gadze to the vertues
foz the loue of god and encrease in them tyll they ben
parfytely stabled in the. And amonge all vertues lo
ke that thou haue a feruent wyl to be besye & deuout
in prayers / stande strongly ayenst temptacyons / be
pacyent in trybulacyons / & stable in perseueraūt that
thou lyue parfytely & so come to parfyte loue. Take
none hede of them that set lytell by perfeccyon / as of
them that saye þ̄ they kepe not to be parfyte / it suffys
seth to them to be lest in heuen / oz come wthin the pa
tes of heuen / these be many mennes wordes & they be
perpillous wordes. foz I warne þ̄ foz sothe what man
hath not parfyte loue here he shall be purged w pay

nes of purgatorie / or ellys with dedes of mercy per-
formed for hym in this worlde / and so be made par-
fyte or he come to heuen blysse for thyder may noman
come but he be pfyte. Beware therfore of suche lyght
& foly wordes & trust moze to thyn owne good dedes
whyle þ art in this worlde than to thy frendes whan
thou art deed / thynke also this lyfe is but short & pay-
ne of purgatory passe all the paynes of the world the
paynes of hell is euerlastynge / & the Joye & blysse of
sayntes is euermoze durynge. Thynke also ryght as
god is full of mercy & pyte / ryght so he is ryghtfull in
his domes. Yf thou wilt thynke on these wordes ofte
I trust to the mercy of god thou shalt waxe stronge in
vertues & withstande so byces þ within a short tyme
thou shalt come to a parfyte loue whā god hath so by-
syted the that thou can loue hþ parfytely than shal all
thy wyl & all thy desyre be for to come to þ loue whi-
che is moost parfyte / that is to saye euermoze to se al-
myghty god in his glozvous godhede euermoze with
hym to dwelle. But for as moche as we may not come
to our desyre / but we begynne somewhat to loue hym
here in this lyfe. Therfore almyghty god mercyfull
thorugh the besechynge of his blestyd moder Marye
graunte vs grace so to loue hym here / þ we may come
to the Joyfull & euerlastynge lyfe / where is moost par-
fyte loue & blysse without ende. Amē. There is reher-
ced shortly how by encrease of vertues thou mayst co-
me to perfeccyon & what vertues thou shalt loue.

In this fourth degree of loue / whiche is called a
parfyte loue thou art taught and counseyllled to
begynne at a lowe degree yf þ desyre to haue an hygh

degree as thus. If thou wilt haue this fourth degree of loue thou must begynne at the fyrst & so encrease in vertues tyll thou come to perfeccyon. But amonge all vertues & al other poyntes whiche ben reherced be fore/ syue poyntes there be as me thynketh spedefull & nedefull euery man to haue & kepe þony good dede shall begynne & bynge to good ende. The fyrste is þ thou haue a feruent wyll. The seconde is that thou be bely in deuoute prayers. The thyrde is/ þ thou fyght strongly ayenst all temptacyons. The fourth is that thou be pacyent in trybulacyons. The fyfth is that þ thou be perseueraunt in good dedes. Of these poyntes I spake befoze in the fourth degree of loue/ but for as moche as they be not there fully declared/ my wyll is by þ helpe of god to wyte moze opely of eche of them one after an other/ & fyrst to wyte of good wyll for þ must be begynnynge & endynge of all good dedes.

¶ How good wyll is and may be in dyuerse maners.

Wyll may be in dyuerse maners/ & is good and euyll/ bely & feruent/ grete & stronge/ but for as moche as reaso whiche god hath gyue ones ly to mākynde techeth & sheweth in euery mānes conscience full knowyge of euyll wyll/ & by cause þ good wyll may be in dyuerse kyndes/ therfore I leue at this tyme to speke of euyl wyl/ & purpose me fully thurgh þ techyge of almyghty god to declare somewhat opely þ vertue of good wyll. I trow wel þ euery mā wold be good or wold do some good dede be he neuer so lpyful & pauēture not chargeth gretly to be good ne belyeth

hym to do good dede. But for as moche as he wolde
good I may not saye but he hath a good wyll. So eue
ry man that wyll well be it strongly or feyntly / ytell
or grete / and in as moche as he wolde good he hath a
good wyll. Neuertheles though this be a good wyll it
is worthy ytell or no mede / for it is no feruent ne bes
sy wyll. for he desyreth to be good without ony trauay
le / & so he suffreth that good wyl passe & chargeth not
gretly to be good ne to do good dede. But what tyme
he belyeth hym to perforce that good wyll in dede /
in that he desyreth to be good & belyeth hy to do good
though he haue not fully his purpose ne may not per
force his wyll in dede / yet there is a feruent wyll & a
bely wyll & I hope a medeful wyll. So that what mā
desyreth to be good & to do good dede & therto belyeth
hym to perforce that wyll in dede of hym it may wel
be sayd that he hath a feruent wyll / yet is þ wyll but
ytell accounted & feble haupnge rewarde to a grete &
stronge wyll. But what tyme thou hast perforced in
dede that thou hast so feruently wyllleth thā thou hast
a grete & a stronge wyll / so that of euery man that is
in wyll to be good or to do good dedes whan he perfor
meth that wyll in dede it may be sayd sothly of hym þ
he is a man of a grete and a stronge wyl. To this acor
deth saynt Austyn & sayth hus. He that wyl do the cō
maundementes of god & sayth he may not but he hath
a good wyll / but that wyll is but ytell & feble / for he
may do & kepe the cōmaundementes whan he hath a
grete & a stronge wyll. As who sayth what man hath
a grete & a stronge wyll may kepe the cōmaundemen
tes of god / and but he kepe them he hath no grete ne
stronge wyll. Yf thou wylt thou mayst kepe the com

maundementes of god / yf thou kepe them thou shalt
be good & do good / so yf thou wylt þy mayst do good &
be good. But yet somtyme & ofte it falleth that by the
grace of the holy ghoost we wyl do somewhat wth al our
herte to the worlshyp of god that is not in our myght
ne power to performe in dede / & han our wyll is sette
in this maner the goodnes of god is so moche that he
receyueth that wyll as for dede. Of this last Austyn
bereth wytnes & sayth. what thou wylt & mayst not do
god acouteth for dede. Thus mayst thou knowe wth
in thy selfe whan thou hast a lytell or a feble wyl / a gre
te or a stronge wyll / & how acceptable a good wyll is
to almyghty god / where thou doost thy belynes to per
forme it in dede. But se now more openly & in speyal
poyntes how thou shalt knowe whā thou hast a good
wyl. Saynt Gregory sayth. We haue a good wyl whā
we drede the harme of our neyghboure as our owne
dysleale / & whā we be Joyfull of the prosperyte of our
neyghboure as of our owne proufyte. Also whan we
trowe other mennes harmes as by waye of cōpassy
on / & whan we accounten other mennes wynnynge
our wynnynge as by waye of charyte. Also whā we
loue our frende not for the worlde but for god / & whā
we loue & suffre our enemye for the loue of god. Also
whan we do to no man that we wolde that no mā dy
de to vs. Also whan we helpe our neyghboure to our
power and in wyll somewhat ouer our power. These
poyntes stande moche by the wyll withoute dede / but
who so wylleth these fully in his herte to be do hath a
good wyll. And as I sayd before his good wyll shall
be accounted before god as for dede. Thus than haue
I shewed whiche is good & feruent wyll though it be

not perfozmed in dede whiche is a grete and a stronge
wyl/and how good wyl in some poyntes is acoüted
foz dede befoze god all be it that it be not perfozmed/
so that the wylle do his besynes to his power. ¶ Ta
ke hede now ferthermoze and beware foz though thou
haue all these maners of good wyl to thy felynge/it
may be so that yet thy wyl is not rygtfull/se how. Be
thou neuer so full of wertues but thou confozme thy
wyl to goddes wyl in all maner thynges bodely and
ghoostly thy wyl is not rygtfull. ¶ To this purpose
saynt Austyn sayth thus. The rygtwylnes of god is
that thou be somtyme hole of body & somtyme syke/
and perauenture whan thou art hole and in prospery
te/ than the wyl of god pleaseth the moche and thou
sayst that he is a good god and a curteys/ yf thou say
so oz thynke so onely/foz thou hast helth oz welth of
body thou hast no rygtful wyl foz as moche as thou
confozmeest not thy wyl to goddes wyl/ but onely in
helth and welth. Foze yf he sente the sykenesse oz other
dysseale perauenture thou woldest be sozry and grutch
ayenst the wyl and the sendynge of god/ & soo in thy
wyl thou woldest make the wyl of god/ the whiche
may not be but euermoze rygt and euen bove dow
ne to thy wyl/whiche boweth and is full croked and
in this thou hast neuer rygtfull herte ne rygtfull
wyl. But what tyme thou dyssest thy wyl that is so
croked and makest it stande rygt with þe wyl of god
whiche may not be croked/ but euer standeth euen/
that is to saye noo thyng wyllleth helth ne sykenesse/
welth ne wo/ but euer holdest the pleased with the wyl
of god than thou hast a rygtfull wyl. Also it is ne
cessfull to a good wyl that it encrease in vertues and

come to the loue of god that it be stable and resonable
What tyme thou art trauayled soze with temptacōns
and grutchest not ayenst goddes wyl but with a glad
herte thou thankest god & suffrest hym lowely & thyn
kest well it is chastelynge to the for thy synnes thā is
thy wyl stable. And whan thou desyrest not hygh res
warde in blyse for thy good lyuynge or ghoostly tra
uayle whiche thou hast here in erthe but onely at god
des wyl what he wyl dyspose for the & no thyng at
thy wyl than thou hast a resonable wyl. Thus I ha
ue shewed the dyuerse kyndes of good wyl whiche be
full spedefull & nedefull the for to knowe yf thou be in
good wyl to loue god / & yf thou haue a stable & a re
sonable wyl þ shalt soone come to parfyte loue. Now
pauenture thou þ trauaylest in ghoostly werkes wylt
thynke or say thus / somtyme it happed that thou wol
dest do some ghoostly trauayle & thou may not perfor
me it in dede / & all be it so thou do it in dede it is full
oft with so grete heuynesse þ thou grutche somewhat
for defaute of ghoostly cōfort To this I may answere
as I sayd befoze / yf þ grutche þ hast no stable wyl &
yf thy wyl be stable þ shalt not drede in this case & le
why. Thou shalt vnderstande þ the fleshe is ever cō
traruous to þ spyryte & þ spyryte 2trarye to þ fleshe
herof þ hast ensample where saynt poule sayd of hys self
in this wyle. þ goodnes whiche I wolde do I do not as
yf he had sayd thus / some good dedes I wyl & desyre
in my soule / but I may not fulfyl them for feblenes of
my fleshe / & all be it somtyme I pforme them in dede
it is wout ony gladnes but what for this trowest þ þ
thapostle sholde therfore lese his mede / for he wolde &
myght not or els he dyde good lōtyme wout gladnes

May but moche the more his mede was encreaced for
two causes. fyrst for the trauaylous werkynge of his
body that he suffred whan the flesshe stryued soo soze
ayenst the goodnes of the spyryte. The seconde cause
is for the heuynes & trauayle whiche þe spyryte suffred
whan he had no ghoostly cōforte. In the same maner
what euer grutchynge thou hast of thy flesshe ayenst
good dedes oꝝ what heuynesse thou suffrest for defaw
te of ghoostly conforte be not therfore abalshed so thy
wyl be stable but suffre & abyde lowely the grace of
god for thy moze mede. Be than stable in wyl & the de
uyll ne thy flesshe shall neuer haue maystrye of the for
all the deuyls in hell may not make the to synne but þe
put therto thy wyl. Fe all the aungels of heuen may
not make the to do good dedes but þe put to thy wyl.
Take hede than that thy wyl be well dysposed to
god & that it be set stably & resonably & than thou hast
a spedefull begynnyng to come to the loue of god. but
for as moche as mānes wyl is ordeyned fyrst & dys
posed with the grace of god that he shall wyl good to
haue that grace in wyl & in all other dede. Prayer me
thynketh is nedefull & therfore somwhat I wyl wyte
of prayer as god wyl gyue me grace.

¶ What parfyte is in prayer and in what maner
thou shalt praye.

Payer is ensample of good luyng & is moost
spedefull to gete grace & to drawe men to loue
god. A deuoute prayer & often bled purchaseth grace
of almyghty god & putteth awaye the fals suggesty
ons of the fende & stablyshed a man in all goodnesse.

¶ Therfore god sayth to his dyscyples thus. Waketh & prayeth that ye fall not in temptacions. Ryght as it is nedefull for a knyght that shall go in to batayll haue with hym armoure & wepen / ryght so it is nedefull & spedefull to euery crysten man to haue with hym cōtynuell prayer / for what of our owne freelte / what by malyce & enuye that the fende hath to vs / we be euer in this worlde in ghoostly batayll more oz lesse by the suffraunce of our lord god. ¶ Therfore sayth laſt Gregoꝝ the more we be trauayled wth thoughtes oz flesshely desyres / the more nede we haue to stande besely in prayers. So thus ꝑ mayst se that prayer is spedefull & nedefull. ¶ Also prayer as I rede is a souerayne helpe to thy soule / confort & solace to thy good aungell / torment & payne to ꝑ deuyl / acceptable seruyce to god parfyte Joye / sad hope / & ghoostly helthe without corrupcion. ¶ Prayer is also a nedefull messenger from euery mannes soule to almyghty god in heuen / & namely from that mannes soule whiche is moche troubled & hath no reste. Some pscyences there be whiche be good / that is to saye be well ruled & be in reste / to suche prayer is also a nedefull messenger to holde ꝑ soule in ghoostly confort & to encrease it & stable it in goodnes. But there be many other men & wymen of dyuerse conscyence. Some there be that haue a bad conscyence whiche be in rest & not troubled / & that ben they that ben sette fully to euyll & not to good. Some haue a bad conscyence & somewhat be troubled in theyr conscyence / & tho be suche ꝑ be somewhat euyll oz begynne to be euyll. Some haue good conscyence & also ben greued in theyr conscyence / & be suche as lyue euyll & begynne to be good. Whyle the conscyence is thus trou

May but moche the more his mede was encreaced for
two causes. fyrst for the trauaylous werkynge of his
body that he suffred whan the fleshe stryued soo soze
ayenst the goodnes of the spyryte, The seconde cause
is for the heuynes & trauayle whiche þe spyryte suffred
whan he had no ghoostly cōforte. In the same maner
what euer grutchynge thou hast of thy fleshe ayenst
good dedes oꝝ what heuynesse thou suffrest for defau
te of ghoostly conforste / be not therfore abalshed so thy
wyl be stable but suffre & abyde lowely the grace of
god for thy more mede. Be than stable in wyl & the de
uyl ne thy fleshe shall neuer haue maystrye of the for
all the deuyls in hell may not make the to synne but þe
put therto thy wyl. Ne all the aungels of heuen may
not make the to do good dedes but þe put to thy wyl.
Take hede than that thy wyl be well dysposed to
god & that it be set stably & resonably / & than thou hast
a spedefull begynnyng to come to the loue of god. but
for as moche as mānes wyl is oꝝdeyned fyrst & dys
posed with the grace of god that he shall wyl good to
haue that grace in wyl & in all other dede. Prayer me
thynketh is nedefull & therfore somwhat I wyl wyte
of prayer as god wyl gyue me grace.

¶ What parfyte is in prayer and in what maner
thou shalt praye.

Payer is ensample of good luyng & is moost
spedefull to gete grace & to drawe men to loue
god. A deuoute prayer & often bled purchaseth grace
of almyghty god & putteth awaye the fals suggesty
ons of the fende & stablysheth a man in all goodnesse.

Therefore god sayth to his dyscyples thus. Maketh & prayeth that ye fall not in temptacions. Ryght as it is nedefull for a knyght that shall go in to batayll haue with hym armoure & wepen/ ryght so it is nedefull & spedefull to euery crysten man to haue with hym cōtynuell prayer/ for what of our owne freelte/ what by malyce & enuye that the fende hath to vs/ we be euer in this worlde in ghoostly batayll moze oꝛ lesse by the suffraunce of our lord god. ¶ Therefore sayth saynt Gregoꝛy the moze we be trauayled w̄ thoughtes oꝛ fleshe ly despres/ the moze nede we haue to stande besely in prayers. So thus ȳ mayst se that prayer is spedefull & nedefull. ¶ Also prayer as I rede is a souerayne helpe to thy soule/ confort & solace to thy good aungell/ toꝛment & payne to ȳ deuyl/ acceptable seruyce to god parfyte Joye/ sad hope/ & ghoostly helthe without corrupcion. ¶ Prayer is also a nedefull messager from euery mannes soule to almyghty god in heuen/ & namely from that mannes soule whiche is moche troubled & hath no reste. Some cōscyences there be whiche be good/ that is to saye be well ruled & be in reste/ to suche prayer is also a nedefull messager to holde ȳ soule in ghoostly confort & to encrease it & stable it in goodnes. But there be many other men & wymen of dyuerse cōscyence. Some there be that haue a bad cōscyence whiche be in rest & not troubled/ & that ben they that ben sette fully to euyll & not to good. Some haue a bad cōscyence & somewhat be troubled in theyr cōscyence/ & tho be suche ȳ be somewhat euyll oꝛ begynne to be euyll. Some haue good cōscyēce & also ben greued in theyr cōscyence/ & be suche as lyue euyll & begynne to be good. Whyle the cōscyence is thus trou

bled the soule hath no reste/therfore to pursuwe for
helpe & grace/prayer that nedefull messenger must do
well his offyce/that is to saye besely without ony tary
enge/& strongly without ony feynynge/& rather co
me to the p[re]sence of almyghty god h[is] nedeth to ha
ue two specyall frendes/h[is] is to say stedfast sayth and
trusty hope with these two frendes prayer taketh his
waye & renneth fast to h[is] pates of heuen& entreth with
out ony lettynge/for he goth to the p[re]sence of h[is] good
lorde truly to do his messlage with full sayth & sad ho
pe/full pyteously he sheweth his nedes & the perylles
of his soule.¶ Than anone the good lorde so ful of pyte
& mercy sendeth his bleasyd loue in to h[is] soule thozugh
the pursute of that good prayer. ¶ Whan this loue en
treth in to that soule anone he maketh all glad h[is] was
full elenge & soyr/he maketh in peas & reste that was
soze troubled. Hope cometh agayn that was out/and
ghoostly strength h[is] was awaye is fully restored whan
the enemyes of the soule/that is to saye the fendes se
this helpe & confort to the soule/with sozowfull chere
they tozne awaye & thus they begynne to crye. Alas
alas sozowe & wo is come to vs/ he we fast awaye for
god fyghteth for this soule. ¶ Thus mannes soule is de
lynered fro the fende by prayer / & so it may sothly be
sayd that prayer is a spedefull & a nedefull messenger
fro mānes soule to almyghty god in heuen. ¶ Thus h[is]
hast herde what is prayer/se now ferthermoze how h[is]
shalt praye. ¶ As often as thou prayest/or what euer
thou prayest put all thy wyll in goddes wyll/in the en
de of thy prayer/ desyrnge euermoze in euery askyn
ge his wyll to be fulfilled and no thyng thy wyll. for
thou mayst praye & aske some thyng that he wyl not

here ne graunte/as yf þ þ praye for soules that be damp
ned thy prayer is not accepted. Also it may so be that
thou desyrest not that is moost helpynge to thy soule
ne to other perauenture for whom þ prayest. Also ma
ny men prayed somtyme for no good entent/and for
that they be not herde. Therfore to be alwaye syker
whā euer thou prayest put thy desyre and thy entent
in askynge in goddes wyll for he knoweth all thynges
and what euer thou prayest he wyll not graunte it the
but that is moost proufytable for the. To this accor
deth an holy clerke and sayth. Oftentyme god graun
teth not many men at theyr wyll for he wyll graunte
them other grace thā they aske to moze helth of theyr
soules. So that it is nedeful that we put all our asky
ge in to his ordynaunce. To this accor deth saynt Ber
narde and sayth. No man sholde let lyght by his pray
er/ for he to whom we praye after tyme the prayer is
passed from our mouth or from our herte/ he wyrteth
it in his booke/ and trustyngly we may hope that he
wyll graunte that we aske or ellys that is moze prou
fytable to vs. Thus than what euer thou prayest put
all thy wyll in to goddes wyll. Also whan that thou
prayest thou shalt praye generally/that is to saye/as
thou prayest for thy selfe so thou shalt praye for other
¶ Thus thou must do for thre causes. fyrst for loue
and charyte wyll that thou do so. And therfore sayth
the apostle. Prapeth eche of you for other that ye may
be laued. The seconde cause is / for the lawe of god
wyll that euery man helpe other in nede. This thou
hast by the techynge of saynt poule where as he sayth
thus. Eche of you bere others burthen/ that is for to
say/that eche of you praye for other or helpe other in

uede & so ye shall fulfyll the lawe of cryste. The thyrd
de cause is/for whoso prayeth for al other as for hym
selfe/þ goodnes of god wyl that he shall be partnyer
of all other mennes prayers. ¶ To this acordeth sayt
Ambrose & sayth thus. Yf thou pray onely for thy self
and for none other than shall none other pray for the
but thy selfe/ & yf thou praye for all other thā all other
shall praye for the. Thus than whan þ prayest praye
for all other. Also whan thou shalt praye thou must
praye with full herte & put away fro the all vanytees
of the worlde all ymagynacyons & all ydel thoughtes
¶ To this acordeth an holy clerke & sayth. Whan we
stande to praye we must with all our herte gyue our
entent to that we praye/ that is to say we must boyde
all fleshely & all worldely thoughtes & suffre not our
herte other wyle to be occupped than about our pray
er. But to this perauenture thou sayst that though þ
be neuer in so good wyl to praye/ thyn herte is a waye
from thy prayer & encombrd with dyuerse thoughtes
that thou mayst haue no whyle thyn herte sadly vpon
thy prayer. To this I graūte þ what the fende whiche
euer is hely to lette all goodnes & what thurgh the vn
stablynes of man thyn herte shalt not be stable vpon
thy prayer I trowe scarsely the tyme of a þat noster.
But whā thou go to thy prayer/ take good hede what
uede thou hast to praye what thou wilt praye/ & how
grette how myghty & how ryghtfull & mercyfull he is
to whom þ wyit praye. Yf thou set thyn herte thus in
the begynnynge of thy prayer/ thou shalt not I trow
gretly be letted/ & though it be so that somtyme thou
be letted with other thonghres/ fyght apenst them w
all thy besynes/ & anone tourne to thy prayer. Yf thou

wylt syght wylfully in this maner god of his grete gra
ce & endeles pyte wyl alowe thy good wyl / & moche
the rather for thy trauayle graūte that þ askest. Thus
than whan thou wylt praye þ must praye w full her
te. Also an other maner prayer there is / that vho soo
hath grace to come therto his prayer shal soone be her
de yf he praye resonably. This maner of prayer is
whan thou art bylyted by the grace of god with grete
conpunccon of herte and swetnes of deuoccon. Con
punccon is a grete loue of t^y soule spryngynge out
of thy herte with teeres of thyn eyen. Whan þ bethyn
kest the vpon thy synnes & vpon the dzedefull dome
of god. Whan þ hast this conpunccon & these teeres
than þ hast full deuoccon / with suche deuoccon be se
ly praye for all tho that haue nede / for what thyng þ
prayest in þ tyme so it be worshyp to god þ art anone
herde without ony taryenge. For as I rede prayer pea
seth almyghty god & maketh hym tozne to mercy. but
whan deuoute teeres come w prayer than of his gre
te pyte he may no lenger suffre / but anone as he were
zstrayned he graūteth what we aske. ferthermoze yf
þ be bled to suche deuoccon þ shalt feruently desyre to
conne loue god / & so by goddes grace þ shalt soone co
me to loue / thus thā loue prayer yf thou wylt come to
þ loue of god. And for as moche as many men & wo
men be moche trauayled by dyuerse temptacyons or
they come to loue / therfoze beware of theym & sooner
to wstande them / som what I wyl shewe of temptacy
ons as me thynketh is nedefull.

¶ How þ mayst beware & knowe of temptacyons
wakyng or slepyng / & how þ shalt wstade them.

By the ordynaūce of almyghty god there be ordeyned good aungels to defende vs fro euyl & to styre vs to vertues and to kepe vs in goodnes.

Also other badde aungels & euyl sprytes there be whiche trouble mankynde wth dyuerse temptacōns to preue mānnes stablenes & that to grete mede to mannes soule. The power of this wycked spryte / that is to saye the fenbe is so grete & the moze a man belyeth hym to please god & rather he is about to greue hym / for as I rede oftymes it happeth & many men whan thy gyue them hole to contemplacyon or to other deuocions than they be trauayled with stronge temptacions by suffraūce of god that they may knowe theyr owne feblenes & to kepe theym meke & lowe for they sholde not lese & grete mede of god for ony maner spyce of pryde / whiche mede is ordeyned for theyr ghoostly trauayle. Also in what euer maner of lower degree man or woman be that wyll withstande synne to his power & lyue after the techynge of goddes lawe / to al suche the wycked spryte hath enuye / & euer moze gyucth theym some maner of batayll grete or lytell slepyng or wakynge. **O**ther men & women there be that he suffreth to be in reste & peas / & tho ben suche as drede not god / but nyght & daye gyue them to all maner lustynges & lykynge of theyr fleshe / for they ben so redy to synne & to do his wyll that hym nedeth not to styre them to euyl / & therfore he suffreth them in peas & without ony trauayle of temptacions. Of suche men speketh saynt Austyn & sayth thus. Some men & women profer theymselke to synne wylfully & abyde not the temptacions of the fende / but they go befoze the temptacions & be redy to synne than the

fende is to tempte them. And sythen it is so that euery man whiche is bely to please god shal be trauayled and pryued with dyuerse temptacyons. I wyl shewe the to my felynge and as I rede of other auctours sh maner of begynnynge of euery temptacyon that thou mayst beware of them & rather withstande the begynnynge & so ouercome the hole temptacyon. ¶ I rede that our enemye the fende whan he wyl make vs to folowe his wyl or ellys for enuye wyl trauayle and greue vs he begynneth with fals suggestyons / that is to saye he putteth in our myndes diuerse ymagynacyons / as worldely & fleshely thoughtes and somtyme other thoughtes whiche be full greuous & peryllous / eyther to make vs haue a grete lust & lykynge in the that be worldely or fleshely / or ellys to bynge vs in grete heuynes or drede thurgh tho thoughtes whiche be greuous & peryllous. ¶ As to the worldely or fleshely thoughtes yf we suffer theym to abyde in oure herte so longe wylfully tyll we haue lykynge in them / than hath the deuyl wonne a grete stronge warde of vs & purleweth ferthermoze with all his belynes to make vs assente to hym as in wyl to perfoyme it in dede. By that dede thou mayst vnderstande euery dedely synne after sh suggestyon is in sh begynnynge To some he begynneth with a fals suggestyon of pryde / or ellys of couetyse / to some with a suggestyon of glotonye or lecherye / and so of all other synnes wherein he suppoeth soonest to haue maystrye ouer man / for euery man is enclyned moze to one maner synne than to an other. And where he hath maystrye / that is to say where that synne is perfoymed in dede / he belyeth hy soze to bynge it in to custome / & so thourough the custo-

me to haue vs hole vnder his power. Go fle & withsta
de all these perylls the prophete Dauid sayth in the
lawter. Go away warde or bowe awaye from euyl &
do good / that is to saye after the expositioun of doc
tours. Go from the euyl of suggestioun / from the sug
gestioun of entysynge / from þe euyl of delytynge / from
the euyl of assentiynge / from the euyl of dede / & from
the euyl of custome. Withstande than all suche woꝝ
dely or flesshely thoughtes as moche as god wyll gy
ue the grace þe thou fal in none of these euylles whiche
as I haue sayd be full peryllous. Ferthermore as to þe
greuous thoughtes & peryllous perauenture þe wylt
aske whiche be tho thoughtes þe be so greuous & peryl
lous. All tho thoughtes that thou hast ayenst thy wyl
whiche make the heuy or soꝝ be greuous. And soꝝ to
shewe the moze openly what man that ymagyeth vpon
on hyghe maters þe be ghooostly whiche passe all erthe
ly mennes wytte. As vpon þe sayth of holy chyrche or
suche other that neden not to be speyfed at this tyme
foꝝ that man hath greuous thoughtes & peryllous. yf
we suffre suche ymagynaciouns abyde & take none hez
de in the begynnynge to the fals suggestioun of þe fende
wim short tyme or euer we be ware eyther he wyl ma
ke vs lese our kyndely wytte & reason / or ellys he wyl
byynge vs to vnrasonable drede. Of suche temptacy
ons it is nedefull to be ware & put them awaye yf þe
may with dououte prayers & other occupaciouns / & yf
thou may not boyde them suffre them than elsely. foꝝ
þe shalt vnderstande þe they be ryght nedeful & mede
full foꝝ thy soule / foꝝ but it were so þe suche thoughtes
come somtyme in to thy mynde þe sholdest seme in thy
selfe that þe were an aungell & no man / therfoꝝ it is

nedefull that thou be tempted otherwyle with euyl
thoughtes that thou mayst se & knowe thyn owne fe-
blenes & vnstabilenes whiche cometh of thy selfe/ and
that þ mayst fele the strength whiche þ hast onely of
god. Also thou shalt suffre suche thoughtes esely/ but
thou mayst voyde them/ for all suche thoughtes so þ
thou delyte the not in them they ben a grete purgynge
for thy soule/ & a grete strength to kepe within the ver-
tues/ & all be it þ they be sharpe & bytter for the tyme
thynke well þ they shal make thy soule clene that was
ryght foule/ & make it hole that was ryght syke and
byngge it in to euërlastynge lyfe & helth without ende
to the whiche lyfe & helth may no man come withoute
grete sharpenes & bytternes. ¶ Also whan þ art tra-
uayled with thoughtes whiche þ mayst not put away
thynke wel that it is a grete ryghtwylnes of god that
thou haue suche thoughtes. For ryght as þ hast had
full often thy wyl & lykynge in worldely and fleshely
thoughtes ayenst the wyl of god/ ryght so it is þ wyl
of god that thou haue other thoughtes ayenst thy wyl
But yet it is good that thou beware of them & that þ
drede them dyscretly and truste stedfastly in god. for
whan the soule hath no delyte in suche thoughtes but
hateth & lotheth them/ thā they be a clen synge & a gre-
te mede to þ soule/ but yf it so be that there come som
tyme ony lykynge of synne or of ony vanyte thorough
suche thoughtes/ than withstande & thynke that it is
a fals suggestyon of the deuyll/ & therewith be dredful
and sorpy that þ hast offended god in lykynge of suche
fals ymagynacions. ¶ I rede that for suche thoug-
tes onely þ shalt not be dampned though they be come
in to thy mynde/ for it is not in thy power to let them

to come. But yf it be so that þ assente oz delyte in them
than beware for there thou dyspleasest god. Also it is
good that þ drede god though þ assente not to euill
thoughtes that þ fall not for pryde. For eche man that
standeth in vertues standeth onely by þ vertue & gra
ce of almyghty god. Thus than beware of thoughtes
for here þ mayst se that all temptacyons begynne w
fals suggestyons of the wycked spyryte. And yf þ has
ue grace to withstande suche thoughtes þ shalt ouer
come all suche temptacōs. And for þ moost souerayn
remedy apenst all maner temptacōs it is good that
þ shewe thy diseale to thy ghoostly fader as oft as it ne
deth els. to some other good man of ghoostly lyuynge
as I sayd befoze in the fyfth poynt of þ thyrde degree
of loue. ¶ Ferthermore to speke of temptacyons. I re
de that whan the wycked fende may not ouercome a
man wakynge/ than is his belynes to trauayle & to ta
ryenge hym slepynge. And that is to dyscepeue hym yf
he may in thre maners. One is to begyle hym thurgh
glad & confortable dremes. The seconde is to greue &
to lette hȳ thurgh sorowfull & dredefull dremes. And
the thyrde is to make hym the rather assente to synne
wakynge thurgh foule syghtes oz other dyuerse vany
tees whiche he suffreth slepynge/ therfore it is good to
beware of dremes/ for in some thou mayst wel byleue
& some it is good to sette at nought. for somtyme god
sheweth cōfort to wycked men slepynge & they sholde
the rather leue theyr synne. & somtyme he comforted
good men slepyge to make them more feruent in his
loue. but for as moche as þ myghtest lyghtly be dyscey
ued thurgh suche illusyons. I counseyll the to put them
all out frō thy herte oz els to shewe the to thy ghoostly

frendes. For oftymes he þ hath moche lykynge in dre-
mes is moost taryed and out of reste. Also þ shalt not
drede suche dremes what soeuer they be. For as I re-
de yf thou be stable in the fayth of holy chyrche / yf þ
loue god with all thy herte / yf þ be obedyent to god &
to thy souerayns what euer þ be as well in aduersyte
as in prosperite. And yf þ put all thy wyll at goddes
dysposycyon than shalt þ drede no maner of dremes
for though they be dredefull & sorowfull to thy syght
be therfor not agast ne heuy / but trustyngly put al to
gyder in to goddes honde he to ordeyne for the as he
wyll. Also though they be to thy syght glad & confor-
table desyre them not ne byleue not in them but yf it be
that they toze to the worschyp of god / yf þ do thus by
the grace of god þ shalt ouercome all temptacons sle-
pyng. Thus than slepyng & wakynge yf thou with-
stande in the begynnynge þ fals suggeityons of that
wycked aungell þ is to save wycked thoughtes & peryl-
ous ymagynacions as I sayd before / than þ shalt
ouercome all temptacons. ¶ To this acordeth saynt
Austyn & sayth. Yf we withstande the lust & lykynge
of vnclene thoughtes there sholde no synne reygne in
our dedely bodyes. Withstande than thoughtes & be
stronge ayenst temptacons / & so thugh that ghoostry
strength þ shalt lyghely come to the loue of god. And
for as moche as suche temptacions & other worldly
trybulacions fall oftentimes to goddes seruauutes
in to grete mede of theyr soules so that they can suf-
fre them mekely & thanke god therfore. I vyll shewe
a fewe conforstable wordes of þ vertue of pacyence by
the whiche þ mayst be styred for to suffre bodily and
ghoostry dyseases gladly for the loue of god.

E How thou shalt be pacient & what tyme pacy-
ence is moost nedefull.

Charyte whiche is moder & keper of vertues is
lost full often by Inpacience. To this acordeth
saynt Gregoꝛye & sayth thus. Men that be Inpacient
whan they wyl not suffre gladly trybulacyous / des-
troye the good dedes whiche they dyde whyle h̄ sou-
le was in peas & reste / & sodaynly they destroye that
ghoostly werke that they haue begonne by good auy-
lement & grete trauayle. By these wordes it semeth h̄
it is nedefull to kepe with vs the vertue of pacyēce yf
we sholde come to the loue of god / for without encrea-
ce of vertues we may not come to h̄ loue. ¶ To speke
than of pacience I rede h̄ in prosperyte it is no vertue
to be pacient / but what man is troubled with many
aduersytees & standeth stably hoppynge in the mercy
of god / he hath the vertue of pacyēce. ¶ In thre ma-
ner of wayes goddes seruaūtes haue nede to be pacy-
ent in trybulacōns. The fyrst is whan god chastyleth
them with his rodde / as with losse of worldely goddes
or ellys with bodely syknes / The seconde is whā our
enemye the fend trauayleth vs with dyuerse tempta-
cyons by the suffraunce of god. The thyrde is whā our
neyghbours do to vs wronge or despytes. In eche of
these thre our enemye bespyeth hym to byrnye vs oute
of pacience / & in eche of these we sholde ouercome h̄
yf we be pacient. As thus yf we suffre easely & gladly
the chastysynge of god without ony grutchynge Also
yf we delyte vs not in the fals suggestyons of the fen-
de & assente in no maner to his wycked temptacyons.
Also yf we kepe vs sadly in charyte whā we suffre ony

wronges or despytes of any of our neyghbours / thus
we sholde ouercome that wycked fende with the ver-
tue of pacyence. I sayd as for the fyrst we shold ouer-
come the fende yf we suffre easely & gladly the chasty-
synge of god without any grutchynge / this is good &
we suffre for it is for grete loue whiche he hath to vs &
so grete mede that he wyll ordeyne for vs. ¶ To this
purpose saynt Austyn speketh & sayth thus to eche mā-
nes soule callynge the soule doughter and sayth thus
Doughter yf thou wepe vnder thy fader wepe not wth
Indygnacōn ne for pryde / for that thou suffrest is for
medycyne to the & for no payne / it is a chastysynge &
no dampnacōn yf thou wilt not lese thyn herytage.
But not from the that rodde / take no hede to the shar-
penes of that rodde / but take good hede how well
thou shalt be rewarded in thy faders testamēt. These
wordes may be remeued to euery crysten man & wo-
man as thus. Yf our fader in heuē sholde chastyse vs
wth losse of goodes or wth syknes of body we sholde not
grutche / but we sholde be sozry & we trespassed ayenste
our fader / & take mekely his chastysynge & euer aske
mercy. His chastysynge is helpe to our soules & rules
of grete penaūce / his chastysynge is but a warnynge
for loue & not durynge for wraeth we sholde not be put
out frome the herytage of heuen it is nedefull we be
boxum to our fader in heuen & suffre lowely & gladly
his ryghtfull chastysynge for our greuous trespassyn-
ge that through the vertue of pacyence we may come
to that grete herytage / that is to saye to the blysse of
heuen to & whiche he ordeyned vs in his last testamēt
that was whan he gafe for vs his herte blood vpon &
crosse. Thus we must suffre gladly the chastysynge of

god without grutchynge. This chastysynge as I sayd
is somtyme in lykenes of body / & somtyme in losse of
worldely goodes. Yf thou be chastyled with lykenesse
of body / haue in thy mynde the wordes of the apostle
whan he sayd thus. All be it that our body outwarde
be corrupted with lykenes our soule within is made
newe & moze cleane frome daye to daye. Also yf we be
chastyled wth losse of goodes / take hede to þ^e pouerte of
Job where þ^e may haue a grete example of pacyēce for
with grete thankynge to god he toke full mekely &
gladly grete pouerte lykenes & many dysleales & sayd
Our lord gaf / our lord hath take awaye / as it plea
seth hy^m so it is do / blessyd be the name of þ^e lord Iesu
Thus þ^e hast example to suffre gladly the chastysynge
of god. I sayd also as for the seconde we sholde ouer
come þ^e fende yf we delyte vs not in his fals suggesty
ons / & yf we assente in no maner to his wycked temp
tacyons. ¶ In the last chapytre before thou hast how
thou shalt be stronge & stable ayenst all temptacyons
Se now moze openly why thou shalt gladly suffre tēp
tacyons without ony grutchynge. One skyle is for yf
thou suffre them not gladly but grutchest ayenst them
than þ^e lettest them that sholde helpe the / the whiche be
good angels & other sayntes / & helpst thyn enemyes
whiche be wycked fendes / for a greter confort is none
to theym but whan they fynde a man heuy and grut
chyng / therfore suffre them gladly and aske helpe &
mercy of hym in whom all grace is and confort. Also
yf thou suffre suche temptacōns gladly and assentest
not to them in lykyng ne in wyll / than thou stoppest
the fende that he dar not assaile the with other tempo
tacōns for he dredth to be put out from the & be ouer

come whan he feleth the so stable & so pacyent that is
a grete dyede to hym. For whan he trauayleth a man
with temptacyons and he be withstande than be his
paynes moche the more encreased in hell. withstande
than his temptacyons with the vertue of pacyence &
so thou shalt ouercome hym. ¶ As for the thyrde way
of pacyence I sayd þ we sholde kepe vs sadly in chary-
te whā we suffre wronges or despytes of other neygh-
bours / suche wronges it is nedefull to suffre for the lo-
ue of god. For as saynt Austyn sayth / he that is so pa-
cyent that gladly wyl suffre wronges shall be ordey-
ned grete and myghty in heuen. ¶ If than thy goodes
betaken from the wrongfully / suffre esely and thyn-
ke in thy herte that thou came naked in to this worlde
& no better than naked shalt thou go away out of the
worlde. Also thynke vpon þ wordes of the apostle whe-
re he sayth. Nought we brought in to this worlde and
no thyng we may bere with vs / thynke vpon these
wordes & I trowe they shall styre the moche to pacy-
ence. ¶ If thou be dyspleased or defamed wrongfully
thynke vpon the wordes of cryst whan he sayd thus
to his dyscyples. Ye be blessyd whan wycked men curs-
se you or despyse you wrongfully whā they purseyue
you or saye any euill makynge lesyn ges ayenst you
wrongfully / Joyeth than & be glad for your mede is
plenteuous in heuen. These wordes me thynketh shol-
de make the to suffre gladly despytes & euill wordes
¶ It falleth somtyme that some miennes hertes be full
grete & cloute by pryde & Inpacyence. But goddes ser-
uauntes whan they se suche men so dyslealed and tra-
uayled in theyr soules haue grete compassyon of them
knowynge wel that it cometh of vnstabilenes of herte

and of wycked Gerynge of the flesshe/ & therfore they
suffre wycked & angry wordes for þ tyme hoppyng þ
after so grete noyle shall come some maner ease & low
nes of herte they suffre also for þ tyme for they knowe
well it is full harde a man to euercome hymselfe/ for
thyle causes euery good man sholde gladly suffre an
gry wordes. Also some men and women there be that
wyl not suffre/ but for one wycked worde they saye
an other and take noo hede to the rewarde that they
sholde haue of god yf they wolde suffre/ suche men al
daye fall in temptacyons for angre of herte and for
inpacence/ therfore what euer thou be that art despy
sed of thy neyghbour suffre gladly & feyne the as thou
herdest hym not vnto the tyme that his herte be eased
and than yf it be suche mater that chargeth þ mayst
speke to hym in easy maner/ and yf it is no chargenge
than it is no force though thou holde thy peas and an
swere ryght nought. Thus I haue shewed the exam
ples for to styre the to pacence. fyrst how thou shalt
gladly suffre the chastysynge of almyghty god as sy
kens of body or ellys losse of goodes. The seconde
how thou shalt gladly suffre the temptacyons of the
fende. And the thyrde how thou shalt gladly suffre
wzonges and despylynges of thy neyghbour. ¶ But
now ouer all the ensamples I counseyll the for to ha
ue one thyng speccall in thy herte/ the whiche shal be
a generall ensample of pacence to suffre gladly all
maner trybulacyons for the loue of god. This ensam
ple is for to haue euermore in thy mynde in eche dysea
se the grete pouerte trybulacyon and the bytter passy
on of ihesu cryst goddes sone whiche he suffred glad
ly & wylfully for the loue of all mankynde. ¶ Of this

good lord spekeþ saþt Bernarde & sayth thus: Cryst
goddes sone of heuen frome the tyme þ he came out
of the glorȳous maydens wombe Marye / had neuer
but pouerte & trybulacyon tyll he went to suffre deth
whiche maner of deth it nedeth not at this tyme for
to shewe it to the. For þ hast it openly by þ techynge
of all holy chyrche. Haue than sadly in thy mynde as
moche as god wyll gyue the grace / how gladly howe
lowely & what he suffred for the / & þ thought I trowe
shall make the to wynde the vertue of pacyence / & to
encreace in other vertues / & so forth within a whyle to
come to the loue of god. And now fethermoze for as
moche as all þ vertues be moost pleasynge & accepta
ble to god whiche be cōtynued & brought to good ende
therfore to strength þ in these vertues I wyll shewe þ
now some wordes of þ vertue of perseueraūce.

3 **H**ow perseueraūce is nedefull & how thou mayst
be perseueraunt.

Perseueraunce is fulfyllynge & ende of all ver
tues / keper of all goodnes / without whiche p
seueraūce no man may se god. But thou be perseue
raunt / þ mayst haue noo mede thanke ne woꝛshyp for
thy seruyce. If thou be perseueraunt thou shalt haue
mede for thy true seruyce / & a grette rewarde for thy
ghoostly trauayle & a woꝛshypful crowne of victoꝛye
for thy stronge batayle. Of this mater þ hast before
in þ fyfth poynt of the thyꝛde degree of loue / therfore
at this tyme it nedeth not to speke but ytell moze as
of this purpose. But I counseyll the in fewe wordes þ
thou wilt be pleueraunt in goodnes that þ trauaylest

to wynde the vertue of pacyence wherof I haue tou-
ched somwhat in the last chapytre befoze. For many
men begynne full well and ende theyr lyfe full peryl-
lously & the cause is for the moze partye Inpacyence
for they wyl not suffre gladly temptacyons & other
trybulacyons. For whan they fele neuer so lytel dys-
sease ghooostly or bodely anone they fall awaye from ver-
tues & tozne agayne to synne. And often it falleth that
some men fall so soze that they deye by that fall / that
is to saye that they fall in to grete syknes & peryll of
soule / that to our syght they deye in grete synne & er-
rours without ony amendement. ¶ Of suche men spe-
keth god almyghty & sayth. No mā þ putteth his hon-
de to the plowe & loketh behynde hym is dysposed to
come to the kyngdom of heuen. ¶ Here perauenture
thou woldest aske what is he that holdeth the plowe &
loketh behynde hym. He putteth his honde to þ plowe
that amendeth his synnes with contrycyon & confelly-
on to brynge forth frayte of penaunce & to encrease in
vertues. He loketh behynde hym that tozneth agayne
to synne whiche were forlaken after tyme he had be-
gonne good werkes. Therfoze what euer thou be that
hast begonne to leue byres / tozne not agayne to them
for a lytell dyssease yf thou wylt haue the grete mede
that longeth to perseueraunce. ¶ Also yf thou wylt be
perseueraunt thou must be stable in herte / yf þ wylt
be stable in herte þ must beware of the lykynge & plea-
syng of the worlde / & flee from wycked cōpany / thou
must take no hede to prayсыnges ne to blamynges / for
of all these cometh vnstabilenes. And yf thou haue o-
ny lykynge in ghooostly werkes that vnstabilenes wyl
put it awaye / therfoze be ware & flee suche maner of

occasyons yf thou wylt be stable. ¶ I saye not that þ
shalt flee bodely from þ world oz fro worldly goodes
foz they be pꝛyncypall occasyons/ but I counseyll the
in herte and in wyll that thou flee all suche vanytees
foz though þ be loꝛde oz lady/ husbonde man oz wyfe
thou mayst haue as stable an herte & wyll as some re
lyggyous that lytte in the cloystres But sothe it is that
the moost lykkest wape is to fle as relyggyous do/ but
foz all may not be men oz women of relyggyon/ therfo
re of euery degre in þ worlde god hath chosen his ser
uauntes. What euer than thou be þ wyt come to þ lo
ue of god begynne fyrst to do good dedes with a good
wyll and a contynuell desyre. After that desyre fulfyl
thy wyll in dede with dyscrecyon that thou mayst con
tynue to thy lyues ende. Whā thou hast begonne thyn
ke in thyn herte that god hath gyue the suche graces to
begynne that thyng to his worshyp/ thou mayst well
do it yf thou wylt perfoꝛme it in dede with the helpe
of god. After this poynte stande stably in wyll/ aske
grace of perseuetaunce/ and perfoꝛme it in dede with
a seruent spyryte. And whan thou hast begonne dys
cretly/ though it be trauaylous in the begynnynge/
all that trauayle be it in fastynges/ wakynges/ pray
ers oz any other ghoostly trauayle all shall be lyght
to the & shall toꝛne the in so grete myrthe and ghoost
ly confoꝛte that thou shalt sette ytell by the passynge
Joye and the vanytees of the worlde. Stande than
stably in wyll and in dede/ and god almyghty that
hath begonne good werkes in the/ wyll noꝛyshe the
foꝛth in all vertues/ defende the from thyn enemyes
teche the to loue hym / and kepe the in to his loue to
thy lyues ende. after this deth thou shalt not dꝛede foꝛ

thou shalt euer abyde in his kyngdome where that is
no care ne dyede / but all Joye & conforzte for euer moze
lastyng. ¶ Now I haue shewed to the foure degreys
of loue / & declared here fyue specyall vertues whiche
as me thynketh be moost nedeful euery man for to ha
ue that wyl trauayle in ghooftly werkes / & to al other
maner men and women they be full spedefull to kno
we whether they be relygious or seculer. And for as
moche as many in the begynnynge haue full lytell sa
uour in deuoute prayers or in holy medytacōns some
perauenture for tender age / & some for vnconnyng /
therfore to suche symple folke I wyl shewe a maner
forme how by medytacyon they may be styred to deu
ocyon / and what maner prayer shall be to theym nede
full.

AB By what prayer or thought thou mayst be
styred to deuocyon.

Uhan thou ordeynest þ to praye or haue any de
uocyon founde to haue a prey place from all
maner noyse & tyme of reste wout ony lettynge. Syt
there or knele there as is moost to thyn ease. Than be
thou lord or lady thynke wel thou hast a god þ made
the of nought whiche hath gyue to the thy ryght wyt
tes / ryght lymes & other worldely ease moze than to
some other as þ mayst se aldaye þ lyue in grete dysle
se & moche bodely myschepes. Thynke also how synful
thou art & were not the keepynge of þ good god thou
sholdest fall in to all maner of synne by thy owne wret
chednes & than þ mayst thynke sothly as of thy self þ
there is none so synful as thou art. Also ys þ haue ony

vertue or grace of good lyuynge thynke it cometh of
 goddes sendynge & nothyng of thy selfe. Thynke al-
 so how longe & how often god hath suffred the in syn-
 ne/ he wolde not take the in to dampnacyon whan þ
 haddest deserued it/ but goodly hath abyden the tyll þ
 woldest leue synne & tozue to goodnes for loth hþ we-
 re to forsake þ he bought so dere with bytter paynes.
 Also þ mayst thynke for he wolde not lese the he beca-
 me man & was bozne of a mayde/ in pouerte & trybu-
 lacyns all his lyfe he lyued. & after for thy loue deth
 he wolde suffre to saue the by his mercy. ¶ In suche
 maner thou mayst thynke of his grete benefytes/ and
 for the more grace to gete to the compūccyon beholde
 with thy ghooſtly eye his pyteous passyon.

¶ A short medytacōn of the passyon of our lord Ihesu
 crist.

Thou mayst here ymagyne in thy herte as yf þ
 sawe thy lord take of his enemyes with ma-
 ny repreues & despytes brought before a Juge/ falsel-
 ly there accused of many wycked men/ & he answered
 ryght nought but mekely suffred the yr wordes. They
 wolde nedes haue hþ deed/ but fyrst to suffre paynes
 Beholde thā that good lord cheuerynge & quakyng
 all his body naked bounde to a pyler about hym stan-
 dyng wycked men wout any reason sore scorgyng &
 bleſſyd body without any pyte. Se how they cesse not
 from theyr angry strokes tyll they se hym stande in
 his blood vp to his ancles/ from the toppe of his heed
 to the sole of his foot/ hole skynne they lefte none/ his
 flesshe they rased to the bones/ & for werynes of them

ſelfe they leſte hym almoſt dede. Loke than aſyde bp
on his bleſſyd moder / ſe what ſozow ſhe made for her
dere ſone / & haue compaſſyon of her payne that laye
there aſworne. Torne agayne to thy lord & ſe howe
they vnbynde hym / how haſtly they drawe hym forth
to do hy more dyſeaſe. A garlonde of thornes they put
vpon his heed tyll the blood ran downe in to his eyen
noſe mouth & eeres. Than they kneled downe w ſoz
nes & aroſe bp with reſreue & ſpette in his face. See
than how þ bleſſyd lady beteth her breaſte / draweth her
clothes / & wyngeth her hondes / & I trowe thou wilt
wepe for that pyteful ſyght. ¶ Loke yet agayn to thy
lord & ſe how they hurle hym forth to an hyghe hylle
there to ſtyle hym hande & foot vpon the rode tree.
Se than fyrſt how ſyerly they drawe of his clothes
& how mekely that he than wente to the croſſe / he ſpre
deth his armes abrode / but ſtrafter with cordes they
drew forth his armes tyl the ſynewes & the Joyntes
be all to broake / & than with full grete nayles they nay
led his precyous hondes to the croſſe. In the ſame ma
ner thou mayſt ſe how greuouſly they drawe his dere
worthy legges and nayled his feet downe to the tree.
Se than how they profered hym for to drynke bytter
galle & eſpyll / and kneled agayn before hym with ma
ny deſpytes. Than herken to that good lord how me
kely he taketh leſſe of his gracpyous moder and of his
dere apoſtles & betaketh them eyther to other as dere
moder and ſone. Than with a grete voyce he comen
ded his ſpyryte to his father in heuen / and hanged
downe that bleſſyd heed ryght forth vpon his breaſt.
Se alſo how ſoone after they perced his herte thugh
with a ſpere with full grete anger and ranne downe

by his body medled blood & water. Than mayst thou
haue full grete pyte beholdynge that good lady how
for sorowe she synketh downe in her systers armes.
Take hede to the chere of his apostle saynt Iohan to
the teres of Marye magdalene and of his other strem-
des/and I trowe amonge all these thou shalt haue co-
punccon & plente of teres. Whan there cometh suche
deuocyon than is tyme that thou speke for thyn owne
nede & for all other quicke or deed that trusten to thy
prayer. Caste downe thy body to the grounde & lyfte vp
thy herte on hye with dredfull chere/than make thy
mone & yf thou wylt thou mayst thynke thus & saye.
Alord god almyghty blessyd mote thou be/þ made st
me/thou boughtest me/thy suffraunce is full grete in
me/þ woldest not take me in to dampnacyon that of-
ten I haue deserued/ but thou hast kepte & saued me
tyll I wolde forlake synne and tozue hole to the. Now
lorde with sorowfull herte I knowleche to thy godhe
de that fallely I haue spended and without proufyte
all my wyttes and vertues whiche thou hast gyue me
in helpynge of my soule all the tyme of my lyfe in dy-
uerse banntees/ all the lymes of my body in synne &
superfluytees/ the grace of my crystendom in pryde &
other wretchydnesse. And sothly good lorde I haue lo-
ued other thynges moche more than the/ & not with-
standynge my grete unkyndenes euer thou hast nou-
ryshed me and tenderly kepte me. Of thy grete suf-
fraunce I had full lytell knowynge/ of thy grete ryghe-
tynesse I had but lytell drede. I toke no hede to than-
ke þ for thy grete goodnes/ but al my lyfe fro daye to
daye grete mater of wrath I haue shewed to þ through
my owne wyckednes/ herfore lorde I wote not what I

shall saye to the but onely this worde in whiche I trust
God of thy grete mercy haue mercy on me / I wote
well lozde all þ I haue cometh onely of þ / I wote well
without the no thyng may be / but my lynne & wret-
chydynes cometh all of me / wherfoze lozde with meke
herte I beseeche thy grace do not to me as I haue deser-
ued but after thy grete mercy / and sende me grace of
thyn holy ghoost to lyghten myn herte / to cōfōrte my
spyrte / to stable me in the ryght waye / to perfoyme
thy cōmaundementes that I may haue perseuerance
in that I haue begonne & that I be nomoze departed
frō the by my vnstabilenes or by temptacyons of myn
enemye. It is lozde yet ful worthy that I be chastyled
for my wycked lyuynge w̄ what rodde thy wyll is / wel
come be thy sendynge. Pacyētly good lozde sende me
grace gladly to suffre thy chastyllynge / cōfōrt me amō
ge for thy grete grace / & whan thy wyll is withdraue
thy rodde & take me to thy mercy. Full bytter be these
temptacyons & full greuous to suffre / & though they
be dyledfull I wote well here after they shall be mede
full to my soule / but good lozde þ knowest well myn
herte is ryght feble / moche is my vnstabilenes / my con-
nyng is but lytell / therfoze good lozde strengthe me /
stable me & teche me as þ madest me & bought me so
kepe & defende me bōdy & soule I take to the no thyng
after my wyll but as þ wylt lozde so mote it be And
now good Ihesu goddes sone knowe of all thyng hel-
pe me in wycked thoughtes that I dysplease the not
in lyuynge ne in assentynge / full often I haue dysplea-
sed the in dyuerse thoughtes all ayenst thy wyll & mo-
che to my lykynge therfoze it is thy ryght wysnes that
I be trauayled w̄ other thoughtes at thyn ordynace

& gracious to me / but curteys Jhesu whan thy wyl is
put them awaye & take me in to thy grace. Jesu cryst
goddess sone whiche stode styll before þ̄ Juge no thyng
to hȳ answerynge / withdawe my tongue tyll I thyn
ke what & how I shall speke þ̄ may be to thy worlshyp
Jhesu goddess sone whose hondes were boude full fo-
re for my loue / gouerne & wyllhe my hondes & al myn
other lymies that all my werkes may begynne & gra-
cyously ende to thy moost pleasure. Also lord & I rest
well that many ther be that trust to my prayer for gra-
ce that ye shewe to me more thā I am worthy / ye wo-
te well lord I am not suche as they wene but though
me prayer be dworthy / take hede to theyr lownes &
to theyr deuocōn & what they desyre to your worlshyp
graunte it them for your goodnes. Graunte them & me
& to all other for whom we be bounde to praye grace
to loue all that is to your lpyng / and you to loue to
your moost pleasynge no thyng to desyre that sholde
dysplese you. All maner temptacyons myghtely to
withstande / all other banytees for your loue to despy-
se / you good lord euer to haue in mynde / and in your
seruyce for to cōhyde to our lyues ende. And yf ye graū-
te vs ony thyng to doo that shall be to vs medefull /
graunte prate to the soules whiche be departed from
the body in the paynes of purgatorye abydyng your
mercy Amen.

In suche maner thou mayst praye in the begynnyng
ge / & whan thou art well entred in to deuocyon thou
shalt perauenture haue better felynge in prayers and
in holy medytacyons otherwyle than I can saye or
shewe. Good broder or syster praye thā for me whiche
by the techynge of almyghty god haue wyrtten to the

these fewe wordes in helpynge of thy soule.

A Good curteys aungell ordeyned to my gouer-
nale I knowe well my feblenes & my vncon-
nyng/also well I wote þ strength haue I none to do
goddess seruyce but onely of his gyfte & of your hely
keepynge. The connyng þ I haue cometh no thþge of
me but what god wyll sende me by your good entpy-
nge. Now good gracypous aūgel I aske you lowely mer-
cy/for lytell hede I haue taken of your good helynes
but now I thāke you as I can w full herte beleschyn-
ge you þ ye kepe me truely this daye & euermore sle-
pyng & wakynge with lykely defendynge & your holy
techyng. Defende me & kepe me from bodely harmes
defende me & kepe me from ghoostly peryles to god-
des worshyp & laūge of my loule Teche me & wyllhe
me my wyttes for to dyspende moost to goddess wor-
shyp & pleasynge. fede me with deuocyon & sauour of
ghoostly swetnes/comforte me whā nede is ayenst my
ghoostly enemyes & suffre me not to lese þ grace that
is graūted me/ but of your worthy offyce kepe me in
goddess seruyce to my lyues ende. And after þ passyn-
ge of the body presente my soule vnto the mercyfull
god. for though I fall aldaye by my owne freelte you
I take in wytnes þeuer I hope in mercy. Gladly wol-
de I worshyp the & I myght to your lykynge therfore
god to worshyp for you/ you also in hym after his ho-
ly techynge. I thanke hym w this holy prayer. **Pa-
ter noster. Et ne nos. Sed libera nos a malo. Amen.**

Deo gratias.

CEnprynted at London in fletestrete in þ sygne
of the sonne By Wynkyn de Worde. Anno dñi M
CCCC.vi.





